

# *Regional Foster Placements*

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*“Sharing the caring”*

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE January 2018**

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# Statement of Purpose

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## **Introduction**

This Statement of Purpose sets out the aims, objectives, philosophy of care and services provided by Regional Foster Placements Limited.

The Statement of Purpose is part of the responsibility in meeting the requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations  
Vol. 4 – Fostering Services  
Guidance update (2011)
- The Care Standards Act (2000)
- Children Act 2004
- UK National Standards for Foster Care (1999)
- TSD Standards for Foster Carers (2012)
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011)
- The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011)

The Statement of Purpose also recognises the requirement of the voluntary and private sectors' important role in delivering services to children as set out in Working Together 2015 Chapter 2: Organisational Responsibilities. This is with particular regards to the vital role of listening to children and implementing effective safeguarding practice in all aspects of service delivery.

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and updated as appropriate by the Senior Management Team of Regional Foster Placements.

## **Aims and Objectives**

Regional Foster Placements is an independent fostering agency providing safe, high quality family placements to children and young people who are 'looked after' by local authorities. We pride ourselves on our ethical practices whilst providing environments which enable the children and young people to fulfil their potential and live positive lives. The children and young people referred, often have complex needs and have a history of being harmed and let down, this often leads to high demands being placed on foster carers and intensive support being required.

Regional Foster Placements' aims and objectives are as follows:

- to provide children and young people with a safe, stable, nurturing and stimulating environment within an approved foster family
- to provide a holistic approach to care within the context of a positive, inclusive value base
- to provide foster carers who will respect and value difference and encourage children / young people to be proud of who they are
- to provide a bridge between the past and present, present and future, for all the children / young people referred to the agency
- to provide opportunities for children and young people to remain with their siblings or to facilitate contact

- to provide a service that works for children and is focused on meeting the needs and fulfilling the potential of children / young people in our care
- to work in partnership with local authorities, other agencies and birth families in helping to meet the aims of each individual child's identified care plan and help them achieve positive outcomes
- To support and value our foster carers in the vital but challenging work they do through providing quality support and training

## **Values and Principles**

Regional Foster Placements adheres to a set of values and principles which must be followed and evidenced in all work undertaken by staff and foster carers in their work with children. These principles when properly embedded in practice, understood and applied can help to ensure children are properly safeguarded:

### **1. Child Centred Approach**

"The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care" (NMS, 2011).

Regional Foster Placements is committed to a child centred approach. Children and young people need to feel valued and respected and their views need to be heard. We will always consider the best interests of any child, making them our focus and priority.

Events are held, such as participation groups, which help and guide service provision. For example children participate in interview panels to help in deciding which staff are best suited to working with them and their carers. We always ensure that children are consulted about their care in a way which considers their age and understanding. We ensure that children attend and participate in CLA, PEP and other meetings and that their voice is at the centre of their care. We will ensure access to advocacy where needed.

### **2. Multi Agency Working**

In accordance with Working Together (2013 and 2015), Regional Foster Placements is committed to working fully in partnership with all agencies to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded effectively. Staff and carers are safely recruited and trained in working together to protect children. All carers and staff attend LSCB child protection and combined agency training.

### **3. Recruitment and Selection**

The agency has rigorous safer recruitment and selection procedures in place. For example we always use Warner style questions at interview. These high standards relate to all employees whether part time or full time staff or locum workers. The agency does not use volunteers. Regional Managers, and all those involved in recruitment and selection, are required to complete safer recruitment training. Visitors and contractors to the offices are asked to read, agree to and sign our safeguarding statement and are not left unsupervised.

#### **4. Support**

Regional Foster Placements is committed to establishing meaningful relationships with children and young people and facilitating support for them and their carers in a number of different formats. Children who have experienced harm will be encouraged and helped to engage with therapeutic interventions or other services that can be identified to enable them to manage their feelings and process their experiences.

Staff who offer support are appropriately trained and our team holds a range of skills, qualifications and aptitudes to meet needs.

#### **5. Supervision**

There is effective, regular and rigorous supervision in place, both formally and informally, for all staff and carers. All staff who supervise others are professionally trained in supervision and their training is updated regularly through attending LSCB approved child focused supervision training. Staff and carers are required to consider safeguarding and child protection issues as part of the supervision process and openly discuss and reflect on their safeguarding practices. The Agency is committed to learning from reflective sessions and always considers how things can be improved for the children in our care. Supervision offers a supportive "holding environment" to help manage the often strong feelings which emerge for carers and staff from their care of traumatised children.

#### **6. Education and Training**

Regional Foster Placements provides regular, good quality training to carers and staff to ensure they are properly equipped to provide the highest possible level of care and are alert to, and confident in, their response to child protection and safeguarding issues. All carers have a training plan that is reviewed at least annually.

An annual training programme is established in consultation with carers and staff so that innovation is combined with core learning and so that the delivery of training is reviewed for efficacy. The staff learning and development programme is regularly up dated and staff are encouraged and supported to develop their learning in line with their personal and professional development plan.

In addition our values and principles are guided by our belief that:

- Children have a right to be protected from abuse and exploitation
- Children who have been abused have a right to help and assistance to return to a happy and healthy childhood
- Children have a right to expect that the promotion and safeguarding of their welfare will be the paramount consideration of those people involved in making decisions which affect their lives
- Children and all appropriate family members have a right to expect that they will be enabled to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their race, gender, cultural or religious background, or any disability
- Children living in foster care have the same rights as all other children
- Children and all their appropriate family members have a right to be consulted about decisions affecting their lives and to have their views taken seriously
- It is essential that plans for individual children are developed in partnership with the child, and their family, and that the plans recognise the child's perception of time and their right to security and choice

### **Philosophy of Care**

Our philosophy of care encompasses the belief that all children and young people have the right to expect the following:

- a safe family environment: a secure base
- to be heard
- to be valued
- to be respected
- to be supported and encouraged
- to be involved in decision making
- to have access to high quality education
- to have access to family and / or significant others

We believe that the adults responsible for the care of children and young people should have the ability to recognise and respect each child as an individual, recognise their potential and assist them in building positive lives.

To enable Regional Foster Placements to meet the needs of the children and young people, we place an emphasis on careful matching with our foster carers. This ensures that the children / young people are placed with foster carers who are best situated to meet that particular child or young person's needs. Our assessment, referral and duty processes work effectively in enabling Regional Foster Placements to successfully match foster carers and children / young people placed. This, in turn, enables us to promote better outcomes in the five key areas stated in the Every Child Matters agenda:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving

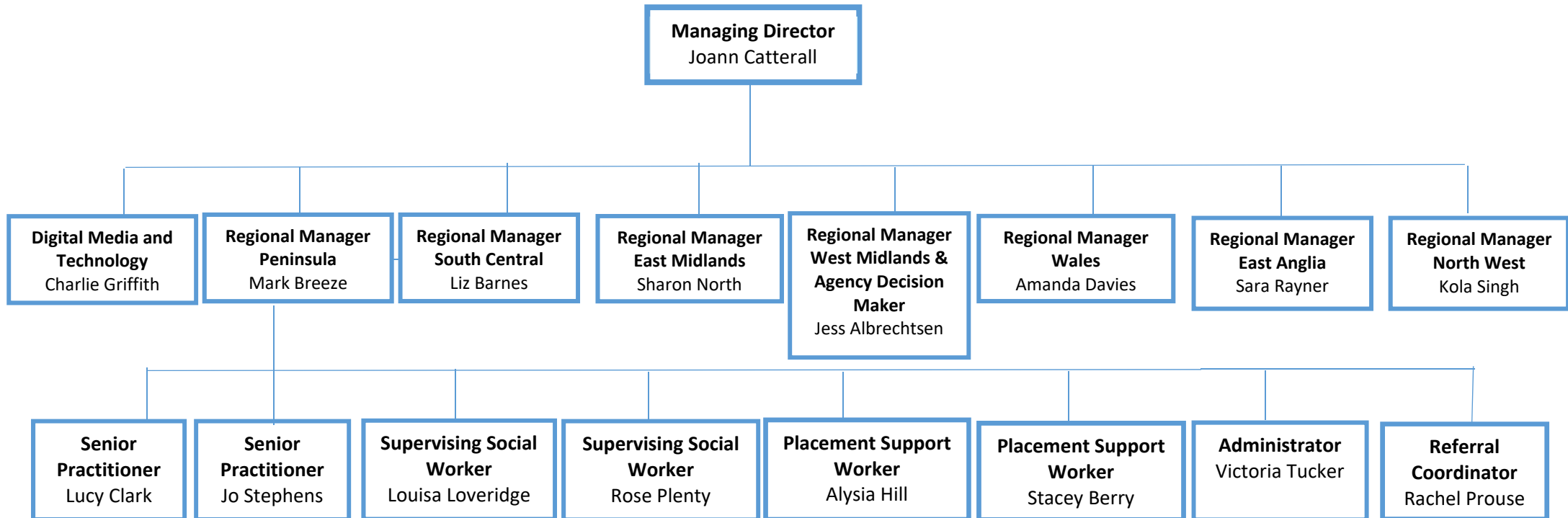
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

At Regional Foster Placements we believe that children have a right to be cared for by foster carers who understand how previous life experiences will have affected the child's emotional development, how this relates to their presenting behaviour and to take this into account when placement and care plans are being developed. To support this philosophy the team uses Attachment Theory to guide the way we assess, support, supervise and train our carers with the aim of providing placements that offer a "Secure Base". The following are the five key, care giving dimensions that will promote security and resilience in our looked after children:

- Availability – helping the child to trust
- Sensitivity – helping the child to manage feelings and behaviours
- Acceptance – building the child's self esteem
- Cooperation – helping the child to feel effective and be cooperative.
- Family membership – helping the child to belong.

The agency ensures that all staff and carers are trained in, and are familiar with, the Secure Base Model and that it is incorporated into our work. Further comprehensive training on "Conscious Parenting" and the use of the "PACE" parenting methodology within foster care is fully available so that the agency has a strong ethos of therapeutic care to help ensure that children receive sensitively attuned care giving to aid recovery from traumatic experiences.

## Organisation and Staffing Structure



Updated January 2018



## **Company Registration**

Regional Foster Placements Limited is an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and is also a Private Limited Company, which is registered under the Companies Act 1985.

### **Group Companies House Registration Numbers**

- Regional Foster Placements Limited: Registered in England and Wales Registration Number 4217642

### **Group Registered Office:**

- Old Auster, The Causeway, Mark, Somerset. TA9 4QF

The Group has one main Board Director, Joann Catterall, who is also the Responsible Individual for the organisation. Mark Breeze is the Registered Manager for the Peninsula area.

Regional Foster Placements Peninsula area has 9 full time staff members, incorporating the Registered Manager, 2 Senior Practitioner Social Workers, 2 Supervising Social Workers, 2 Placement Support Workers, a Referral Coordinator and an Administrator. As well as the permanent team, we have a group of 4 experienced Social Workers that carry out sessional work for the organisation, this work mostly relates to the completion of Form F Assessments. We also employ an experienced Independent consultant therapist to support carers, children and young people in placement.

All social work qualified staff are registered individually with the Health Care Professional Council. We follow safer recruitment practices and all staff are DBS and background checked in accordance with best practice guidance.

In addition to company organisational meetings occurring on a monthly basis, the Regional Manager meets with the Responsible Individual on a monthly basis to monitor service performance and to discuss and implement strategic plans for ongoing service development. Operational team meetings take place regularly and there are service development days attended by the entire team.

## **Arrangements for supervision, training and development of staff**

All staff are afforded access to quality supervision provided by suitably trained and qualified staff. Supervision takes place on a monthly basis and is properly recorded. The key focus of supervision is on the welfare and protection of children.

All staff are properly and comprehensively inducted into the agency and receive a probationary appraisal. Following the probationary period a professional development plan is developed for each new member of staff. Annual appraisals take place for each staff member and provide a mechanism to review progress against clear objectives and to plan training and development needs on an individual basis to equip staff with the skills required to meet the needs of children and to keep up to date with professional practice issues and which reflect the legal obligations and business needs of the fostering service.

The agency has a team learning and development program which is regularly updated and which identifies individual and collective training needs and sets out a clear plan as to how we will meet these needs.

The team meets together and trains together regularly so that core operational practices such as the Secure Base Model are clearly owned and understood by all.

## **The Work of Regional Foster Placements**

Regional Foster Placements is an independent fostering agency that recruits, trains and assesses foster carers to look after children placed by local authorities. Once children and young people are placed with our foster carers we are dedicated to providing a service that is child centred and serves the interest of each and every child. In order to do this we provide environments that keep children and young people safe from harm and abuse.

Regional Foster Placements offers several types of placement in order to meet the needs of the children and young people referred and the expectations and requirements of the local authorities with whom we contract. These include: task focused time limited placements, long term placements, parent(s) and child assessments, sibling group placements, respite and emergency placements.

In the case of accepting referrals for children to be placed in an emergency and where only limited information is available the agency takes particular care to gather as much information as is possible to assess risk and will only place with carers who are specifically able to manage such a scenario in as safe a way as possible. The agency is careful not to breach any conditions in such a scenario as a child being placed across county boundaries or placing a child alongside another child. We work in partnership with both placing and area authorities.

## **Embedded philosophy of safeguarding**

Regional Foster Placements is committed within all aspects of practice to ensuring the highest quality of child centred service possible. We seek to promote and protect the rights of children: both those placed within our service and those who are part of fostering households. As such, strong safeguarding practice is the cornerstone of our service.

In particular the organisation is clear that safeguarding children (the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm) is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play (see p5 working together 2015). The key to good practice is the development of a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings. This is echoed through the organisational commitment to quality training and supervision of both staff and foster carers.

## **Organisational policies and procedures**

Organisational policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated so that they are legislatively compliant and reflect latest knowledge and research.

Staff and carers have easy access to all policies and procedures and updates are issued regularly.

Some key policies are:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Managing allegations
- Complaints and representations
- Behaviour management
- Equality and diversity
- Health and Safety
- Carer and children's participation

## **Regional Foster Placements believes that Every Child Matters**

In September 2003, *Every Child Matters* was published. This reshaped children's services to help achieve the outcomes considered to be essential to the well-being of children / young people and their later life. The five outcomes named are embedded in Regional Foster Placements practice.

These five outcomes are:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

Looked after children and young people will only be able to achieve these outcomes if Regional Foster Placements works in partnership with the team around the child.

## Being Healthy

The agency philosophy for the health outcomes for children and young people is based on setting appropriate achievable targets for each individual.

All children and young people placed with Regional Foster Placements are registered with a General Practitioner, Dentist and Optician. Health information is recorded on the agency's bespoke electronic system. This allows progress to be recorded by the foster carer which in turn can then be monitored and evaluated by the Registered Manager and the supervising social worker.

Children are encouraged to make healthy choices in their lives and to attend health appointments including annual health assessments as part of this.

The process is monitored on a monthly basis by the supervising social worker who reports to the Registered Manager on all health matters. Carers undertake mandatory first aid training and are obliged to attend regular refresher courses to ensure their competence.

Regional Foster Placements ensures that, where needed, each young person has the necessary equipment or facilities that they may require because of ill health or disability. All workers involved ensure that their relationships with young people promote accessibility to further advice and support.

The aim is to provide quality care that promotes children and young people's health by:

- keeping children physically healthy by monitoring their health and keeping all regular and routine health appointments.
- promoting children and young peoples' mental and emotional health by providing a nurturing environment and working in partnership with all concerned including specialist workers from LAC/CAMHS services when necessary.
- helping children and young people to make healthy choices by encouraging them to keep physically fit and eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- helping children and young people not to take illegal drugs and discouraging them from smoking and consuming alcohol by informing them of the risks involved.

Regional Foster Placements believes that promoting and providing education on health and related issues will not only improve the health of the young person but also their self-esteem. This includes providing literature on smoking, drug and alcohol abuse etc. Regional Foster Placements will also access specialist services such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team Service (CAMHS). If a referral to CAMHS is not deemed appropriate we may offer support from our independent therapist or trained support workers.

## Staying Safe

Regional Foster Placements has robust child protection procedures, which are consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures where the children or young people are placed. Any suspected abuse or ill treatment of a foster child will be responded to in line with the organisation's procedures, with actions taken to ensure the welfare and safety of the child at all times. The Registered Manager is the organisation's senior designated manager regarding child protection matters. There are clear procedures for dealing with allegations against foster carers and members of staff.

Regional Foster Placements respects the right to confidentiality of each child or young person in foster care, however, to ensure the child's safety this right is not absolute. Carers are helped to understand the balance between protecting a young person's right to confidentiality with the need to ensure his or her safety, within the child protection process.

All carers have access to information about, and are trained in, child protection and safer care practices. These are intended to safeguard both the looked after child and also the fostering family. Each foster home has an individual safer care policy ensuring that shared responsibility is taken for care practices within the household. The family safer care policy is regularly reviewed and updated when there are changes to the household.

Regional Foster Placements has clear procedures on responding to children or young people who are absent without authority or missing from home, these are in line with agreed Local Safeguarding Children's' protocols and we always ensure that police and other agencies fully understand the vulnerabilities of the children with whom we work should they be absent or missing.

Regional Foster Placements acknowledges the particular vulnerability with looked after children to sexual exploitation and we take our duty to protect, through a proactive approach, very seriously. Staff, carers (and where appropriate children) attend training, we have robust policies and procedures and work with other agencies to help protect children. All children have a CSE risk assessment on file and this is updated and reviewed.

## Enjoying and Achieving

All children and young people are expected and encouraged to attend school or, depending on their age, some form of educational provision. Where possible children and young people will be maintained in their existing schools. Should this not be possible then Regional Foster Placements will liaise with local authorities concerning the provision of education. Foster carers may be reimbursed a proportion of their expenses should they be required to transport children and young people to school out of their catchment area.

Each child or young person has a Personal Education Plan and Regional Foster Placements' carers and staff are committed to working in partnership with all involved to ensure that this document is completed and the plan within it is followed. The agency will, where necessary, facilitate, contribute to and promote the development and use of ECHP's so that additional needs are properly met.

Foster carers are required to provide a suitable environment in which the child or young person can study when at home and to attend education reviews, parents' evenings and other educational events as appropriate. Looked after children are not taken out of school for holidays with their carers unless agreed and clearly in their best interest.

Foster carers further assist children and young people in enjoying and achieving by:

- having them ready for school by ensuring they have all the materials and appropriate clothing
- attending school regularly and helping them to regard school as a positive experience
- helping them to prepare for any examination or test that they undertake as part of their education
- helping them to take part in recreational activity within the community and encouraging them to look for education opportunities outside of school
- helping children settle to learn through an attachment based approach which takes into account the child's previous experiences. It is particularly important that strong relationships between home and school are developed and maintained and that key attachment relationships within the school environment are formed.

### Making a Positive Contribution

The opportunity for children and young people to succeed and make a positive contribution is an essential aspect of the fostering task. Financial support is provided to foster carers to enable the child or young person to actively join clubs, take up hobbies and activities. They are also encouraged and supported in:

- engaging in decision making within the placement and helping them to participate in decision making outside of the placement
- active involvement in the communities in which they live and giving opportunities to engage in community activities safely
- developing their self-confidence by positive contacts with the community
- promoting different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds
- Participation in training, participation events and developing our "in care council"

## Achieve Economic Well-being

At Regional Foster Placements all of our children and young people are encouraged to plan for the future, especially those who are due to leave care. We work alongside external agencies in supporting the child or young person and our foster carers are expected to contribute to the preparation of Pathway Plans. Regional Foster Placements also encourages and supports those who are able to provide for their foster children beyond the age of 18 years. Where appropriate, and in consultation with the young person and the placing Local Authority, we will promote the principle of Staying Put thus providing the young person with additional support and guidance in order that s/he may make a successful transition into adulthood with the continuing security of the secure base provided by their foster carers.

In general, Regional Foster Placements and our foster carers provide an environment where:

- the foster child can access further education and training
- employment opportunities are supported and every opportunity is given to the foster child making the transition from varying educational establishments
- support, advice and guidance is given in finding suitable and appropriate accommodation when the young person is ready to leave the placement
- age appropriate self-care skills are developed throughout the placement and embedded at an early stage
- the foster child is competent and confident at using appropriate transport and having access to suitable amenities
- the young person is given advice and practical support in respect of financial planning for their future in order that she/he can live in households which are financially secure
- The young person is given opportunities to understand and gain experience in managing finances appropriate to their age and understanding

## The Recruitment, Approval, Training and Review of Foster Carers

Regional Foster Placements is committed to recruiting foster carers from diverse backgrounds in order to offer appropriate placements for children and young people that reflect their cultural and ethnic identity. There continues to be a paucity of foster carers who reflect the changing ethnic mix of the Peninsula area however, as an organisation we are taking steps to engage actively with local communities and recruit from within those communities.

Enquiries from prospective foster carers are received centrally and are passed to the regional office to which the enquiry is applicable. Discussions then take place and further details gathered with the prospective applicant. Where appropriate literature about Regional Foster Placements and the fostering task is sent to them prior to an initial visit.



Initial visits are conducted to inform the prospective carers about the realities of the fostering task, whilst ensuring an informed decision is made by both parties in respect of proceeding with the application. The initial visits are completed by the Registered Manager or a qualified Supervising Social Worker. Prospective applicants who are not considered suitable are informed of the professional opinion of the worker involved and offered advice and guidance as appropriate. Following a decision to proceed with an assessment, the carer(s) will be asked to complete an application form giving detailed information about themselves and their family and consent to having the necessary checks and enquiries undertaken to ascertain their suitability to foster. Verification of identity is also checked as well as personal history. References are obtained from:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (enhanced check)
- Local Authorities
- Children's Services
- Other agencies as appropriate

Disclosure and Barring checks are obtained on all adult members of the household as well as other significant regular adult visitors to the family if the assessing social worker considers circumstances require these checks.

Applicants are expected to attend "Skills to Foster" training which is normally held over four consecutive weekdays. Where couples are jointly applying to foster both individuals should attend. Training is based upon the Fostering Network 2014 Program which covers the following areas:

- What do Foster Carers Do?
- Identity and Life Chances
- Working with others
- Understanding and caring for children
- Child Protection, Safe Care
- Understanding and managing behaviour
- Transitions
- My Family Fosters

Regional Foster Placements uses the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F assessment process. This form is based on clear competencies which are essential to the fostering task. This enables a very detailed and thorough evidence based assessment to be undertaken.

The applicant(s) is/are required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and this report is made available to the agency who may then seek advice from their own medical advisor. The applicant(s) are asked to identify at least three personal referees and at least 2 will be interviewed as part of the assessment process.



The assessing social worker will visit the applicant(s) home, generally on eight to ten occasions, to meet and collect information about all members of the household and the applicants experience and skills in relation to fostering. During the assessment process applicants will be helped to compile a portfolio of written material giving examples of relevant experience and skills.

Regional Foster Placements aims to complete the assessment within 3 to 6 months, however, this can occasionally take longer when references and other checks are delayed. All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file and like all other information, is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Once the assessment has been completed, it is considered by the Foster Panel which provides a quality assurance feedback to the agency as regards the reports presented. Prospective carers are expected to attend, together with the assessing social worker, to answer any questions panel may raise having considered the completed documentation.

Panel is usually held in Plymouth and meets approximately once monthly usually on a week day evening. The panel comprises members who have experience in all areas of work with children including the experience of being in foster care. The current Chairperson is Mike Lock who is the headmaster of a local special school. Panel has access to a legal advisor (a member of the panel) and a medical advisor (member of the panel) though further guidance may be sought from the agency medical adviser where a second opinion may be required.

All panel members undertake induction, training and appraisals to ensure that recommendations made are informed, reflective and well evidenced.

The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendations from the panel on behalf of the agency and makes the final decision about approval taking into account all of the information available. Applicants are informed verbally within two days (usually sooner) of the decision makers decision and in writing (within five days) about the decision.

### **Training Provided for Foster Carers**

Training is an important element of the support available to foster carers and, therefore, comprehensive pre and post approval training is made fully available to all of our foster carers and families. At Regional Foster Placements we provide training programs for our carers which include a number of mandatory courses. Training is provided both internally and externally that is to say some courses are provided by our own staff and others (such as CSE and PIPS) are presented by partnership training organisations who we commission from. Such providers include the Children's Society, Iron Mill Institute, Psychology Associates, Babcock and the Social Care Training Hub.

All newly approved carers are required to complete the Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within a year of approval. The organisation uses the materials provided by the Skills to Foster to partly evidence completion of the standards where appropriate. All newly approved foster carers receive an induction and a signed copy is kept on record.

All foster carers are required to attend at least 3 training courses per annum (in addition to ensuring their first aid certificate and Local Safeguarding Children's Board training are in date) in order to maintain their approval as carers on behalf of Regional Foster Placements.

All approved foster carers have a training plan that is reviewed annually and are required to maintain a training and development portfolio which demonstrates how they are meeting the skills required by the agency.

Training is provided to:

- improve foster carers knowledge and develop and refine skills
- empower foster carers to adopt a professional approach to continual improvement
- establish a positive framework of values, which promotes equality of opportunity
- ensure foster carers are aware of the effects of discrimination and the impact on children in all parts of the community
- ensure that foster carers are confident and competent in keeping children and young people safe
- ensure foster carers are kept updated on current legislation and new theoretical perspectives

The following courses are incorporated in the organisation's training programmes:

**Core/mandatory courses;**

- Emergency first aid
- Child protection and Safeguarding including CSE and Internet Safety
- Attachment
- Safer caring including Allegations
- Managing Challenging Behaviour through De-escalation
- Multi agency LSCB child protection training
- Health and Hygiene

### **Additional and recommended courses in the 2018 training programme are:**

- **Sensory Integration – Fostering**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **ADHD and Autism Awareness**
- **Mindfulness – Fostering**
- **Secondary Trauma and Workplace Stress**
- **Physical Intervention and Breakaway**
- **Contact Matters**
- **Self Harming Behaviours**
- **Resilience and Recovery**

The agency also offers a full range of online courses. Always, the aim is to tailor training to meet the individual needs of children placed and the families who care for them. Where we do not provide training we will always source this locally to meet training needs.

### Supporting further learning

Regional Foster Placements is committed to supporting foster carers to receive formal recognition of their skills, knowledge and experience and actively supports their ongoing development. A number of our carers hold the NVQ level three qualification and we will always support carers in their further learning.

### **Review of Foster Carers**

Regional Foster Placements has detailed procedures for completion of reviews of foster carers which reflect the requirements within the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. All foster carers are initially reviewed at the foster panel within a year of their approval or before. The first annual review is presented to the agency's foster panel, thereafter every annual review is also presented to the panel unless specific circumstances require a panel review at an earlier stage for example, following a Child Protection Investigation, or concerns regarding the carer(s). The review procedure focuses on the core competences for foster carers and also considers the Professional Development Plan for the foster carer. The scope of each annual review is wide ranging and includes seeking feedback from all children placed, their parents (where appropriate), social workers, independent reviewing officers, foster carers and their families, educational staff and others.

### **Policies & Procedures and other documentation**

All foster carers receive a Foster Carer Handbook on approval which includes the organisation's policies and procedures as well as a copy of the Statement of Purpose. The handbook is updated regularly and covers all relevant procedures including managing allegations, financial guidance and information, legal information, insurance details and how to make a complaint.

Following approval all carers sign a Foster Carer Agreement with the agency, covering the matters set out within the Regulations.

## **Arrangements for Consultation with Children and Young People**

Children and young people are individually consulted through the review system and are encouraged and supported in attending meetings to discuss their care and plans for the future. Should the child or young person not wish to attend or not be old enough to contribute, then Regional Foster Placements will act on their behalf or will access an independent person or advocate to carry out this role.

Children and young people are also fully involved in the foster carer review process. They are also encouraged to have contact with their social worker and foster carers are advised of the statutory responsibility for the social worker to visit and that social workers should be able to see children and young people alone. All children and young people are provided with a Young Person's Guide which contains information regarding their rights and advised of the Complaints and Comments procedures.

Our staff run group sessions for both children and young people in care and birth children of carers. At these sessions views of the children and young people are sought regarding their care and future developments of the service and activities.

The children and young people are given the opportunity to have individual training around the recruitment process and are supported whenever participating in a selection process. Their views are given equal weight to the other interviewers on the panel. Children and young people are supported to attend Skills to Foster Training and we also facilitate a young people's interview panel where applicants to foster are interviewed, appraised and educated by a panel of looked after children.

## **Services Provided by Regional Foster Placements**

Regional Foster Placements offers a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages. All placements are 'matched' to ensure that they meet the needs of the child and the skills and experience of the foster carers. All placements are negotiated with the child's or young person's responsible local authority and through individual placement agreements.

Regional Foster Placements is committed to the promotion of contact with family members and significant others in line with the care plan and the wishes and feelings of the child, whilst also acknowledging what is in the best interests of the child or young person. Where contact is not appropriate, we would wish to ensure that the child / young person has updated information and knowledge about those that are important to them. In support of this commitment, the following pieces of work can be undertaken:

- supervision of contact
- life story work
- family assessments
- parenting assessments
- reports in proceedings / for case conferences
- support of family group conferences
- individual counselling/family therapy
- SGO reports
- Together / apart assessments
- Contact Observation Reports

Regional Foster Placements values the work foster carers undertake and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people. Appropriate support for the families who foster is vitally important to a successful placement. Regional Foster Placements provides creative and flexible support arrangements for children and young people and their foster carers. The identification and arrangement of the necessary levels of support occurs when a child or young person is matched to a foster carer at the placement planning stage. This support is then monitored and adjusted throughout the placement.

Regional Foster Placements offers the following support to all of our foster carers and their family:

- Access to a member of staff - 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year
- A minimum of monthly formal supervision and support from a qualified supervising social worker
- Regular telephone contact from the supervising social worker.
- Placement support worker to work individually and collectively with children and young people, including birth children
- Foster carer support groups in each area
- Active peer mentoring service
- Foster carer representatives
- Activity co-ordination
- A programme of events for approved foster carers and their families that includes an opportunity for carers to talk with everyone within the organisation

both workers and other carers. The events also afford the opportunity to speak with the director of the agency privately or within a group setting

- Children looked after and birth children's group(s) – defined by the young people
- A quarterly group newsletter.
- Professional support for foster carers negotiating with schools and in the promotion of children and young peoples' educational needs.
- A comprehensive post-approval training programme, including Training Standards and Development for Foster Carers and access to on-going professional development opportunities
- A level of financial support that values the skills and commitment of foster carers.
- Regular respite according to the needs of the children in placement and the (Regional Foster Placements has a specific policy regarding the provision of respite care for foster carers and looked after children).
- Additional payments for taking children on holiday
- Skilled training from staff (dedicated member of staff to oversee delivery and co-ordination of training)
- Counselling / therapeutic support
- Support from a highly experienced therapist

Regional Foster Placements believes that this package provides a positive way of ensuring that foster carers are fully supported and that placements are successful.

### **User Involvement**

The agency has strong child and foster care participation policies which actively promote user involvement and which set out our working vision of inclusion and engagement. Looked after children are involved in foster carer training, recruitment of staff as well as contributing to service development. Regular meetings take place which afford a normative and formative experience. A recent example of good practice is the production of the "good respite guide" and the contribution to that made by the children's participation group. Foster panel members include a formally looked after child.

The agency also promotes active foster carer participation. Carer representatives attend team planning meetings and hold individual meetings. Foster carers participate in presenting training and sit on interview panels. The agency also runs a very active peer to peer mentoring service. The approach is about building a true and meaningful working partnership of care between carers and their families, staff and children.

## **Equal opportunities and anti-discrimination**

The organisation's Equal Opportunity Policy aims to develop services on the basis of equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices, without prejudice to race, culture, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation. The policy is made available to all staff and carers.

It is recognised that one effect of discrimination is that children and young people can feel disempowered and deprived of opportunities and services. All involved with the organisation have access to training in anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice.

The fostering service seeks to encourage, in foster homes, an environment which promotes understanding, trust and cooperation. This requires that all members of the household are treated with dignity and respect. Carers are asked to communicate in ways which are non-discriminatory and to encourage children and young people to do likewise.

Regional Foster Placements aims to provide placements where there is a respect for and promotion of the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.

## **Complaints and Allegations**

There is an established complaints procedure which can be used by any child or young person, foster carer or person acting on their behalf. The child or young person also has access to their placing authority's complaints procedure and can also contact Ofsted or other external organisations as appropriate. All complaints are taken seriously and where possible are resolved internally.

## **Allegations of Abuse or Neglect**

If there is an allegation of abuse or neglect or if it is suspected, Regional Foster Placements staff and foster carers should follow the child protection procedures of the local authority in which the child lives. Staff must report a child protection/safeguarding concern to the Senior Designated Manager, their deputy or another Senior Designated Manager within the agency. The Local Authority social worker for the child (or their manager) should be informed as soon as possible by telephone and in writing i.e. email. The LADO for the geographical area of the foster carer should be informed within 24 hours in the event of an allegation. OFSTED will be notified of any significant events.

## **Ofsted**

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting Regional Foster Placements. They also receive and are responsible for investigating any complaints about the service provided by Regional Foster Placements.

Regional Foster Placements South West were last inspected in June 2015.

The following is taken directly from the Ofsted Inspection Report dated June 2015.

*"The overall quality rating is **good**."*

*"This fostering service is good because the responsible individual, manager and staff place children and young people at the heart of everything they do. A foster carer who had transferred from another agency said" I am very impressed- I love their ethos- they always put children first"*

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC062999>

Ofsted can be contacted at:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231



## **Staff and Qualifications**

### **Registered Manager**

Mark Breeze  
BSc (Hons) 1984  
DIP SW 2005  
Post Grad Diploma Applied Social Studies 2006  
Ad. Dip C 2002  
Level 5 diploma: in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young Peoples Management 2015

### **Senior Practitioner**

Lucy Clark  
Dip SW 2004  
BA (Hons) Social Work 2004

### **Senior Practitioner**

Jo Stephens  
BSc Social Work 2011

### **Supervising Social Worker**

Louisa Loveridge  
BSc (Hons) Social Work 2015

### **Supervising Social Worker**

Rose Plenty  
BA (Hons) Education Studies 2013  
MA Social Work 2016

### **Placement Support Worker**

Stacey Berry  
GNVQ Intermediate Health and Social Care  
GNVQ Advanced Health and Social Care  
C.A.C.H.E Diploma in Pre-School Education

### **Placement Support Worker**

Alysia Hill  
BSc (Hons) Psychology 2011

### **Referral Coordinator**

Rachel Prouse  
Panel Administration Training 2016  
PACE 2017

### **Administrator**

Victoria Tucker  
BSc (Hons) Hospitality and Tourism Management 2004  
Panel Administration Training 2017  
Safer Recruitment 2017

### Useful Contacts

<p><b>Registered Office For Ofsted</b></p> <p><b>Ofsted Number</b> <b>SC062999</b></p>	<p>Regional Foster Placements Unit 3, Moorside Court Yelverton Business Park Devon PL20 7PE Tel: 01752 220109</p>	
<p><b>Registered Manager</b></p>	<p>Mark Breeze Tel: 07917 425004 Email: <a href="mailto:mark@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk">mark@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>Director</b></p>	<p>Joann Catterall Tel: Email: <a href="mailto:jo.catterall@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk">jo.catterall@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>Registered Office</b></p> <p><b>Registration Number</b> 4217642</p>	<p>Old Auster The Causeway Mark Somerset TA9 4QF</p>	
<p><b>Regional Foster Placements Emergency Out of Hours</b></p>		<p>Tel: 01752 220109</p>
<p><b><u>Local Authority Children's Services contact numbers</u></b></p>		
<p><b>Somerset Children's Services</b></p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours: 01458 253241 Local Safeguard Children's Board: 01823 357868</p>	
<p><b>Devon Children's Services</b></p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours: 0345 6000 388 Local Safeguard Children's Board: 01392 386067</p>	
<p><b>Plymouth Children's Services</b></p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours: 01752 346984 Local Safeguard Children's Board: 01752 307535</p>	
<p><b>Torbay Children's Services</b></p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours: 01803 824519 Local Safeguard Children's Board: 01803 207176</p>	
<p><b>Cornwall Children's Services</b></p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours: 01208 251300 Local Safeguard Children's Board: 0300 1231116</p>	

<b>The Office of the Children's Commissioner</b>	33 Greycoat Street London SW1P 2QF <b>Tel:</b> 020 7783 8330 <b>Fax:</b> 020 7931 7544 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk">info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk</a>
<b>OFSTED</b>	0300 123 1231 <a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>
<b>Voice</b>	Helpline: 0808 800 5792
<b>Fostering Network</b>	For general enquiries call 020 7620 6400 or email <a href="mailto:info@fostering.net">info@fostering.net</a>
<b>Childline</b>	0800 11 11



[www.regionalfosterplacements.co.uk](http://www.regionalfosterplacements.co.uk)

[enquiries@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk)

Copies of the Statement of Purpose can be made available in other languages and also braille by contacting us at the above email addresses or on: Tel: 01752 220109.