

# *Regional Foster Placements*

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*“Sharing the caring”*

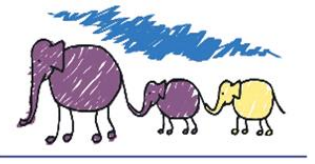
**West Midlands Region  
SC450627**

**Statement Of Purpose**

**December 2017**

**Call – 01905 754653**

**[www.regionalfosterplacements.co.uk](http://www.regionalfosterplacements.co.uk)**  
**[wmadmin@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk](mailto:wmadmin@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk)**



## Statement of Purpose - Contents

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## Introduction

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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 Care Standards Act (2000)**
- **The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011)**
- **The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011)**

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

### (1) Aims and Objectives

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**Regional Foster Placements** is a 'family owned' independent fostering agency providing safe, high quality placements to children and young people who are 'looked after' by local authorities. We pride ourselves on providing an environment which enables the children and young people to fulfil their potential and live positive lives. The children and young people referred often have complex needs a history of being neglected and/or abused which 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 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 professional foster carers who will respect and value difference and encourage children and young people to be proud of who they are



- to provide a bridge between the past and the present, present and future so that children and young people can understand and come to terms with their experiences and then move on in a positive way
- 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 and young people in our care
- to work with local authorities and other agencies in helping to meet the aims of each individual care plan and achieve positive outcomes

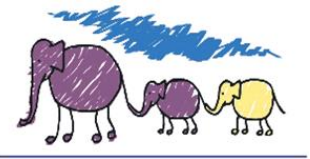
## (2) Philosophy of Care

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

- **a safe family environment**
- **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 regard and respect each child as an individual, recognise their potential and assist them in building solutions for their 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 or 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 matching processes work effectively in enabling Regional Foster Placements to successfully match foster carers to the children and young people referred to the



agency. This, in turn, enables us to promote better outcomes for children and young people.

### (3) Management Structure and Staff

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

#### **Group Companies House Registration Number**

- Regional Foster Placements Limited: Registered in England and Wales, Registration Number 04217642

#### **Group Registered Office:**

- Old Auster, The Causeway, Mark, Highbridge, England, TA9 4QF

The company has one Director, Joann Catterall, who is also the Responsible Individual for the organisation.

The Agency decision maker for the South West, South Central, East Midlands, East Anglia and Wales regions is Jessamy Albrechtsen.

Sharon North is the Agency Decision Maker for the West Midlands Region and North West branch office.

The headquarters of the agency are in the South West (Yelverton), with registered offices in Hove, Norwich, Radcliffe on Trent, Worcester and Cardiff. There is also a branch office in Liverpool awaiting registration.

#### **Regional offices and Managers**

Office Base	Manager	Ofsted No
3 Moorside Court Yelverton Business Park Yelverton PL20 7PE	Mark Breeze Registered Manager South West	SC062999
Sapphire House Roundtree Way Norwich NR7 8SQ	Sara Rayner Registered Manager East Anglia	SC442774



<b>BD Business Centre Blackpole Road Worcester WR3 8SQ</b>	<b>Jess Albrechtsen Registered Manager West Midlands</b>	<b>SC450627</b>
Cranmer Suite St James Business Park Grantham Road Radcliffe on Trent Nottinghamshire NG12 2JP	Sharon North Registered Manager East Midlands	SC486607
Unit E5b Knoll Business Centre Old Shoreham Road Hove, East Sussex	Liz Barnes Registered Manager South Central	1183032
Branch Office: Bridge Chapel Centre Heath Rd Liverpool L19 4XR	Kola Singh Regional Manager North West	Currently being administered by West Midlands office – registration with Ofsted in process
Regis House Malt House Avenue Cardiff Gate Business Park Pontprennau CF23 8RU	Amanda Davies Registered Manager Wales	Registered with CSSIW 00009400073

The Regional Managers meet with the Responsible Individual on a quarterly basis (over two days) to monitor service performance and to discuss and implement strategic development plans.

Operational team meetings and practice meetings take place monthly.

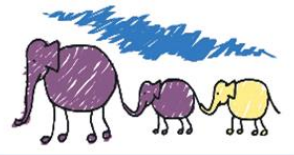
The current staffing at Regional Foster Placements – West Midlands comprises of :

Jessamy Albrechtsen – Registered Manager (Dip SW & NVQ level 7 & in Management)

Jo Farmer – Snr Practitioner (Dip SW)

Vega Kelly – Administrator

Kola Singh is the Regional Manager based the North-West Region Branch Office (CQSW & NVQ level 5 in Management)



## (4) The Work of Regional Foster Placements

**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: respite and emergency placements, short term placements, long term/permanent placements, parent(s) and child placements and sibling group placements.

In September 2003, *Every Child Matters* was published. This proposed a reshaping of 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 are:

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

Looked after children or young people will only be able to achieve these outcomes if the agency works alongside the statutory agencies in helping them to promote these objectives.

### **Being Healthy**

All children or young people placed with Regional Foster Placements are registered with a General Practitioner, Dentist and Optician. Where required, a Medical Passport is completed and held by the foster carer and an individual Health Plan completed by the Supervising Social Worker.



Carers undertake first aid training and are obliged to attend health related training courses on a regular basis.

**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 ensuring they feel valued and promoting contact with their families if safe to do so.
- helping children and young people to make healthy choices by encouraging them to keep physically fit and eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- discouraging young people from taking drugs and/or smoking, informing them of the dangers of doing so and supporting them in cessation plans.

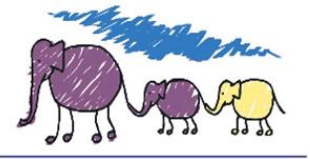
**Regional Foster Placements** believes that promoting and providing education on health and related issues will not only improve the health of the young person but also their self-esteem. This includes providing literature on smoking, drug and alcohol misuse etc. Regional Foster Placements will also access specialist services such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team Service (CAMHS).

## **Staying Safe**

**Regional Foster Placements** has robust child protection procedures, which are consistent with the Safeguarding 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 Regional Manager is the





organisation's Designated Child Protection Officer for each region. There are also clear procedures for dealing with allegations against foster carers.

**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.

There are also clear guidelines and procedures in terms of child protection and safeguarding responsibilities in relation to parent and child placements.

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.

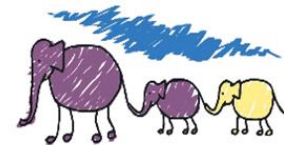
Each foster home has an individual safer care policy ensuring that shared responsibility is taken for care practices within the household (for example where the male carer is the only driver in the family).

**Regional Foster Placements** have clear procedures on responding to children or young people who are absent without authority or missing from home in line with agreed local authority protocols.

## **Enjoying and Achieving**

All children and young people are expected and encouraged to attend school or some form of educational provision. Where possible, children and young people will be maintained in their existing schools. If this is not possible, Regional Foster Placements will liaise with local authorities over 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 commits to supporting and contributing to these documents, where appropriate. Foster carers are expected to provide a suitable environment in which the child or young person can study when at



home and attend education reviews, parents' evenings and other educational events as appropriate. They are also aware that it is not accepted practice to take children and young people out of school for family holidays.

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 have to face 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.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

The opportunity for children and young people to succeed and make a positive contribution is considered 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 the following: -

- making decisions within the placement and helping them to participate in decision making outside of the placement.
- engaging in positive behaviour, which is law abiding and assists the community
- involvement in the communities in which they live and providing opportunities to engage in community activities safely.
- developing their self-confidence by positive contacts with the community.
- promoting different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

## **Achieve Economic Well-being**



At **Regional Foster Placements** all 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 such as 16+ services 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 can provide for their foster children beyond the age of 18 years to do so.

We aim to provide an environment where: -

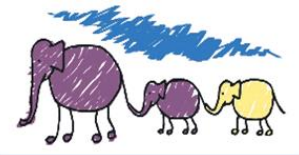
- the (fostered) young person can access further education and training
- the young person is supported with employment opportunities and making the transition from education to further training or work
- support, advice and guidance is provided to the young person to enable them to locate suitable and appropriate accommodation when they reach maturity and leave the placement.
- the young person is supported in developing age appropriate self-care skills
- the young person 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 they can live in a household which is financially secure and appropriately furnished

## **(5) The Recruitment, Approval, Training and Reviewing of Foster Carers**

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**Regional Foster Placements** has a commitment to recruiting foster carers from diverse backgrounds in order to offer appropriate placements for children and young people. The organisation has a recruitment strategy that continues to lead to good responses from people wishing to foster.

Regional Foster Placements actively recruits foster carers with resilience, care and empathy for young people. Initial visits are undertaken to provide information to 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 diversity of carers and their skills and experiences allow us to ensure that children and young people are matched to families that can support them with a wide spectrum of complex needs.



Regional Foster Placements uses the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F assessment process. This enables a very detailed and thorough objective evidence based assessment to be undertaken. Therefore, prospective carers who do not meet the rigorous standards of proven abilities to look after other people's children are either directed towards further vocational work within the childcare field or advised that they do not meet our criteria at this time.

Enquiries from prospective foster carers are received locally where, following an initial discussion, further information about the agency and the fostering task is sent to them if appropriate.

The applicants are then allocated to a social worker for an initial visit which takes place in the home of the prospective foster carers, which may result in: -

- a decision to proceed further with an assessment
- a decision to not proceed further with an assessment. This decision and the reasons for it will be shared with the enquirers
- following a decision to proceed with an assessment the potential carers will be asked to complete an application form giving detailed information about themselves and their family and consent to have the necessary checks and references undertaken to ascertain their suitability to foster
- verification of identity is also checked as well as personal history

Checks will then be undertaken which include: -

- an enhanced disclosure and barring check (DBS)
- a minimum of three personal references from people who have known the applicants for a minimum of three years (at least two will be interviewed as part of the assessment process)
- local authority check/s
- education checks where applicants have children in school/college
- ex-partner references
- employer references (both current and any previous employment with children or vulnerable adults both paid and unpaid)
- other agencies e.g. Early Years.



Enhanced DBS 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 this.

The applicants are required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and this report is made available to the agency.

Assessing social workers will visit the applicants 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.

Preparation/assessment training, "Skills to Foster", is provided which covers: -

- What do foster carers do?
- Identity and life chances
- Working with others
- Understanding children in foster care
- Safer Caring
- Transitions
- Child Protection

This is a full-time, 3 or 4-day course which all prospective foster carers must attend before being presented to Panel for approval. (Feedback on the course is incorporated in the final assessment documentation).

To assist in the decision-making process, applicants are encouraged to attend the Panel meeting held at the end of the assessment.

The panels are made up of people experienced in all areas of work with children: a foster carer, some with an education background, a health background an independent member and a person who has been fostered. The Agency also has access to medical advisers for second opinions and specialist advice should the need arise.

The West Midlands Panel is based in Worcester and has a central list of 10 Panel members which includes :



- Independent Social Workers (3 - including the chair),
- Care experienced individuals (2 - one of whom is registered blind and the other is also a Foster Carer)
- A retired head teacher of an Independent School for looked after children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Vice Chair)
- Foster Carers (2 - one currently fostering and also a care leaver and one retired from Short Break Fostering children with disabilities as well as previously being a Registered Nurse in both Learning Disability and Mental Health.)
- 2 Clinical Psychologist (one specialising with Children one with Adults)
- A health visitor

The ethnic origin of panel members includes African Caribbean, Dual Heritage Black African and White British, Asian and White British. There are 3 males and 7 females in this group.

The content of the assessment report, excluding all confidential references, is shared with the applicant(s) and then presented to the Panel. The Regional Manager acts as Panel Advisor.

The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendation from the Panel on behalf of the agency and makes the final decision on approval. Applicants are informed verbally and in writing about the decision.

It is the aim of Regional Foster Placements – to complete the assessment within 4 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.

Personal references, which are provided in confidence, cannot be accessed by applicants unless requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **Training Provided for Foster Carers**

**Regional Foster Placements** recognises that fostering is an increasingly demanding and highly complex profession. Due to this, the organisation is



committed to providing high quality accessible training that is of relevance to all our 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 foster carers.

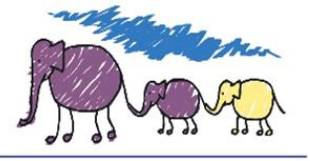
At Regional Foster Placements we provide continuing training programs for our carers including a number of mandatory courses.

After approval, fostering households are required to attend at least 3 training courses per annum to maintain their approval as carers for Regional Foster Placements.

Foster carers attendance at training supports their personal and professional development and also informs their annual review.

Each region develops an annual training programme to meet the needs of its carers. The training available in the West Midlands in 2017 included:

- Skills to Foster
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- First Aid
- Safer Caring, Allegations and LADO (including internet Safety)
- Recording and Communication skills
- Promoting Positive behaviour
- De-escalation
- Sexual Exploitation
- Therapeutic Parenting (Parenting with PACE)
- Contact Matters
- Self-Harm Awareness
- Promoting Education in Foster Care
- Health and Hygiene
- ADHD & Autism Advanced Level Fostering
- Radicalisation
- Caring For Asylum Seeking & Refugee Children Fostering
- Legal Highs
- Supporting and Advocating for Children with Disabilities
- Looking After Yourself as a Foster carer
- Life Story and Memory work
- Food Safety and Hygiene Matters
- Safe Handling of Medication



- Self- Harming Behaviours
- Sexualised Behaviours

The majority of training is provided through face to face training events; with a selection of online courses also available.

Foster carers are required to complete the Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards once approved by Panel. These standards contain areas of knowledge which are based on the competencies essential to the fostering task and provide evidence towards meeting many of the knowledge requirements of the NVQ 3 Award. All training provided by regional Foster Placements can be cross referenced with the Induction standards.

## **Review of Foster Carers**

**Regional Foster Placements** has detailed procedures for the completion of annual reviews of foster carers which reflect the requirements within the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. All foster carers are initially reviewed within twelve months and then annually. The review procedure focuses on the National Minimum Standards (2011) and the foster carers abilities to meet the needs of children and young people under every Child Matters agenda. It also considers the Professional Development Plan of the foster carer.

The first and every third annual review is presented to the agency's fostering Panel. In between, if an independent SW has completed the review, these are not taken to Panel. Where reviews are completed with the Agency manger these are also presented to Panel to ensure a level of independence. Some specific circumstances may require a panel review at an earlier stage for example following a child protection concern/safeguarding investigation or significant change in circumstances.

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

Once approved by the Panel, all foster carers have access to a Carer Handbook which includes the agency's Policies and Procedures, the Statement of Purpose, agency paperwork, information on Ofsted etc. All





carers sign a Foster Carer Agreement with the agency as well as a supervision agreement.

## (6) Arrangements for Consultation with Children and Young People

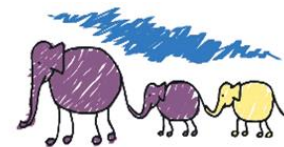
Children and young people are individually consulted in the following ways:

- Children and young people are spoken to by Supervising Social Workers at unannounced visits which take place twice a year
- The 'What I Think' booklet is provided for the children and young people to complete ahead of the foster carer's review
- Young people aged 12-17yrs are invited to consultation events during year. The purpose of this is to gain the young people's views to help us develop and improve the services
- Annual surveys are sent out to all children to complete at the beginning of the year asking for feedback on the previous 12 months.

Children and young people are also fully involved in the foster carer review process. They are 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 information regarding their rights and advised of the Complaints and procedures. On arrival in placement all children receive Welcome Box which includes a young person's guide and information about their foster family. It also includes notebooks, pens, picture frames, a stress ball and a beautiful hand made quilt donated by Project Linus UK

## (7) Services Provided by Regional Foster Placements

Our foster carers are our greatest resource and therefore, we are carefully selective in identifying carers who have the skills and knowledge required to evidence an appropriate match when offering a placement in this difficult and demanding profession.



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

All placements of children and young people with Regional Foster Placements foster carers are made and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations. Therefore, all carers are properly approved, reviewed and sign a foster carer agreement. Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including initial introductions between the child and foster carers. “Child friendly” profiles of the foster family are made available to the Local Authority to share with the children on advance of introductions wherever possible.

**Regional Foster Placements** are 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 meetings**
- **Individual counselling**

**Regional Foster Placements** value 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 provide 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 offer the following support to all our foster carers and their families: -

- An out of hours support service - 24 hours a day for 365 days of the year.
- A minimum of 6 weekly formal supervision (usually calendar monthly unless having to be re-arranged) and support from a qualified Supervising Social Worker. Supervising Social Workers have a maximum caseload of 12 -14 households thus ensuring that we can provide good quality support to our foster carers
- Regular telephone contact from the Supervising Social Worker.
- A Support Worker to work individually and collectively with children and young people (where available)
- Regular foster carer support groups
- Birth children events
- Family social activities are arranged at least three times a year to bring fostering families together
- A comprehensive post-approval training programme, including TSD Standards
- A level of financial support that values the skills and commitment of foster carers.

**Regional Foster Placements** believe that this package provides a positive way of ensuring that foster carers are fully supported and that placements are successful. Children and young people referred to the agency may have experienced many rejections and the aim of Regional Foster Placements is to minimise this happening again. Foster carers joining the organisation are expected to be committed to providing better outcomes for children that are cared for within the group.

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

The agency's Equal Opportunity Policy aims to develop services based on equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices, without prejudice to race, culture, gender, sexuality, religion or disability.



The policy is available to all staff and carers.

It is recognised that Looked After Children can feel disempowered and deprived of opportunities and services.

We strive to develop an environment which promotes understanding, trust and co-operation. This requires that all members of the household are treated with dignity and respect.

Carers are asked to communicate in ways which are respectful, anti-racist and anti-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.

## (8) 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.

If an allegation is made against a foster carer, the Designated Child Protection Officer for Regional Foster Placements will discuss the situation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

This discussion will agree whether the allegation needs investigating through a formal child protection/safeguarding multi-agency strategy meeting or whether it can be dealt with through Regional Foster Placements' internal processes.

## Ofsted



Ofsted is responsible for inspecting Regional Fostering Placements – West Midlands. They also receive and are responsible for investigating any complaints about the service provided by the agency. Significant incidents (Schedule 7, Regulation 36) are reported to Ofsted without delay.

Ofsted can be contacted at:  
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231



**Call - 01905 754653**

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

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