

East Anglia Region SC442774

Statement of Purpose September 2018



Regional Foster Placements
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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 for meeting the requirements of:

- The Care Standards Act (2000)
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011)
- The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act 1989 amended 2004

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



(1) Aims and Objectives

Regional Foster Placements is an independent fostering agency providing a Secure Base (Schofield and Beek, 2014) through safe, high quality family 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 and have a history of being subject to significant harm by adults in a place of trust with parental responsibility. The net impact of these experiences, where the child has been harmed or let down, often leads to high demands being placed on foster carers and intensive support being required.

The East Anglia office is located in Norwich. 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 an holistic approach to care within the context of a positive, inclusive value base, regardless of ethnicity or cultural heritage. We are confident that our foster carers welcome diversity and embrace difference.
- to provide professional 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 the present, present and future, for all the children / young people referred to the agency. We acknowledge the importance of links with the child's family of origin so long as this is in the best interests of the child.
- 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 with local authorities and other agencies in helping meet the aims of each identified care plan and achieve positive outcomes.
 Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOE, 2015).

(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 Family membership, 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 of origin 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 duty processes work effectively in enabling Regional Foster Placements to successfully match foster carers and children / young people placed. We set out to improve the child's emotional well-being, promote their resilience and by improving placement stability we can ensure that children have an opportunity to build positive relationships to improve the child's attachment processes. This, in turn, enabling us to promote better outcomes for children and young people in the five key areas:

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

(3) Management Structure and Staff

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 company Director and Responsible Individual for the organisation is Joann Catterall. Jessamy Albrechtsen is the Agency Decision Maker for all regions except West Midlands and North West. Liz Barnes is the Agency Decision Maker for West Midlands and North West (see regional offices on page 17, for the Regional Managers details and their Ofsted status)

Regional Foster Placements (East Anglia) was registered with Ofsted on the 15th of March 2012. They were last inspected in March 2018 and achieved a rating of 'Good' in all areas.

The members of East Anglia staff team are:

- The Regional Manager is Sara Rayner (Social Worker). Sara was appointed as the Regional Manager from the 1st of September 2016 and her application for Registered Manager with Ofsted was approved on the 4th May 2017. Sara has also attained NVQ Level 4 in Management.
- Liz Daly and Naomi Bradley are Senior Practitioner's (Social Workers).
- All the Social Workers are registered with HCPC.
- Supervising Social Worker There is agreement for an additional Supervising Social Worker; we are currently in the process of recruiting to this post.
- We are currently in the process of recruiting a full-time & parttime Administrator.

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

Operational team meetings take place monthly.

A copy of the current organisational and staffing structure can be found in the appendices section of this document.

(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: task focused time limited placements, long term placements, parent(s) and child assessments, sibling group placements, short term, respite, bridging to adoption and emergency 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. A Medical Passport is completed and held by the foster carer and an Individual Health Plan is completed by the Supervising Social Worker. Carers undertake first aid training and are obliged to attend health related training courses each year.

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.
- helping children and young people not to take illegal drugs, discouraging the
 misuse of alcohol and discouraging them from smoking by informing them of
 the dangers and by not role modelling smoking to them. Please see Regional
 Foster Placements policy C15 Alcohol, Drugs and Substance misuse.

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 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 Safeguarding Officer for each region. There are also clear procedures for dealing with allegations against foster carers. Regional Foster Placements have a duty to report safeguarding concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

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 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 will have an individual safer care policy ensuring that shared responsibility is taken for care practices within the household.

Regional Foster Placements have 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 authority protocols. Regional Foster Placements will notify Ofsted in regard to all schedule 7 notifications.

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 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, where appropriate, these documents. 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:

- engaging in decision making 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.
- 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.

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 Connexions 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 to do so. Staying Put Arrangements for Care Leavers aged 18 years and above (DOE, HMRC and DWP, 2013)

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 support is given to the foster child making the transition from Education.
- support, advice and guidance is given in finding suitable and appropriate accommodation when they leave the placement.
- age appropriate self-care skills are developed.
- the foster child is competent and confident at using appropriate transport and having access to suitable amenities.
- they are given advice and practical support in respect of financial planning for their future in order that they can live in households which are financially secure and appropriately furnished.

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

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 a proven record of resilience, robustness and empathy with young people. Initial visits are constructed to enlighten prospective carers to 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 associate skills allows us to ensure that young people are matched within placements that support a wide spectrum of complex needs.

Regional Foster Placements uses the Coram British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CoramBAAF) 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, which is objective as opposed to subjective. Therefore, prospective carers who do not meet the rigorous standards of proven abilities to look after other people's children within the form, are either directed towards further vocational work within the child care field or advised that at this time they do not meet our criteria.

Enquiries from prospective foster carers are received centrally, before being allocated to the appropriate region to follow up the initial enquiry. Following an initial discussion with the prospective foster carer, further information about Regional Foster Placements and the essential requirements of the fostering role are discussed.

Prospective foster carers are then allocated to a social worker for follow up contact. An initial visit then takes place in the home of the prospective foster carers, which may result in:



- A decision to proceed further.
- A decision to not proceed further. This decision and the reasons for it will be shared with the prospective foster carers.
- In East Anglia we invite prospective foster carers to complete the 'Skills to Foster' course prior to a decision being made to proceed with an assessment.
- Following a decision to proceed with an assessment the prospective foster 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 enquiries undertaken to ascertain their suitability to foster.
- Verification of identity is also checked as well as personal history.

Including references being obtained from:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (enhanced check).
- Department of Health.
- Social Services or local Children and Young Persons Department.
- Any other relevant agencies e.g. NSPCC.
- Previous partners where applicable.
- Employment and personal references.
- Interviews with a prospective foster carer(s) birth children.

Disclosure and Barring Service 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.

Prospective foster carers are required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and this report is made available to the agency. Prospective foster carers are asked to identify at least three personal references, all of whom are interviewed as part of the assessment process.

Assessment social workers will visit the prospective foster carers home, generally on eight to ten occasions, to meet and collect information about all members of the household and the prospective foster carers experience and skills in relation to fostering. During the assessment process prospective foster carers will be helped to compile a portfolio of written material giving examples of relevant experience and skills. Prospective foster carers will also be encouraged to commence their Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers (TSD) workbooks as a means of providing additional evidence during the Form F assessment process.

Preparation/assessment training, 'Skills to Foster', is provided which covers the responsibilities of being a foster carer and the method of working in partnership with the agency. This is a full-time, 3-day course. All prospective foster carers must attend the 'Skills to Foster' training 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 expected to attend the Panel meeting held at the end of the assessment.

The East Anglia region has its own foster panel. The Panel is made up of people experienced in areas of work with children including: an independent foster carer, someone with a background in education, someone with a background in health, someone who has experience of being 'looked after' as a child, members with a background in Law, members with a background in social care settings and an Independent Social Worker. The content of the assessment report, excluding all references, is shared with the prospective foster carers and then presented to the Panel. The Regional Manager acts as Panel Advisor.

The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendations from the Panel on behalf of the agency and makes the final decision about approval. Prospective foster carers 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 up to 8 months or longer when references and other checks are delayed. If an assessment takes longer than 8 months a brief report is presented to Panel noting the reason for the delay. 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.

We aim to keep all references undertaken during the Form F process confidential and we will not actively share this information with prospective foster carers; unless a prospective foster carer or a foster carer requests access to the references held.

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

All foster carers (and their spouse or partner) are required to attend at least 3 training courses per annum in order to maintain their approval as carers on behalf of Regional Foster Placements

Training is provided to:

- Improve foster carers knowledge and develop and refine skills.
- Support foster carers to adopt a professional approach to continual improvement.



- Establish a positive framework of values, which promotes equality of opportunity.
- Provide a framework of continual improvement for foster carers so they are able to support children and young people in the looked after system to achieve better outcomes.
- Develop knowledge and understanding 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.
- Assist foster carers in recognising their own development and training needs and keep them updated on current legislation and current thinking.

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

- Skills to Foster
- Working with children who have been abused or neglected
- Safer Caring, Allegations and LADO
- Behaviour Management including de-escalation techniques
- Contact Matters
- Recording and Communication
- First Aid
- Loss, Grief and Separation
- Attachment
- Safeguarding (including Child Sexual Exploitation)
- Radicalisation
- Men Who Foster
- Children and Domestic Violence
- Working with and undertaking Parent and Child Assessments
- The Mental Health of Looked After Children
- Young People and Sexualised Behaviour
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Hygiene (including administration of medication)

Courses are available through face to face and/or online training.

Foster carers are required to undertake the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers (TSD) within the first twelve months of their approval. These standards contain areas of knowledge which are based on the competencies essential to the fostering task.

All training provided by Regional Foster Placements is crossed referenced with the TSD Standards.



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 reviewed annually. The review procedure focuses on the core competences for foster carer's which appear in the relevant assessment format, it also considers the Professional Development of the foster carer.

Each review is presented to the agency's fostering Panel annually; unless specific circumstances require a Panel review at an earlier stage, for example, following a Child Protection Investigation or recommendations from LADO outcomes.

Policies & Procedures and other documentation

All foster carers receive a Carer Handbook once approved by the Panel. All carers sign a Foster Care Agreement with the agency.

(6) 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. 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 Comments procedures.

Other events to discuss children and young people's views are also held.

(7) Services Provided by Regional Foster Placements

Our foster carers are our greatest resource and, therefore, we are carefully selective in identifying foster carers who have the skills and knowledge needed to evidence an appropriate 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 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 contracts. All matching decisions will be recorded with practitioners' rationale, as to the suitability of each placement made to consider its appropriateness for the child.

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 have signed a foster care agreement. Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including initial introductions between the child and foster carers.

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
- permanence reports, reports in proceedings and reports for child protection case conferences

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 of our foster carers and their family:

- Access to a member of staff 24 hours a day for 365 days of the year (our 'out of hours' service is provided by the qualified social workers in the team).
- The Social Worker's in the East Anglia team have access to the Agency Therapist who is based in the South West region; our team can seek a consultation with the Agency Therapist as required to support our fostering households or the child placed in their care.



- A minimum of monthly, formal supervision and support from a qualified supervising social worker when children are in placement.
- Reflective supervision model using Signs of Safety (Turnell, 2013).
- Regular telephone contact from the supervising social worker.
- Foster carer support groups in each area.
- A male only foster carer training session; facilitated by a male Social Worker to enable free discussion around specific topics pertaining to the role of the male foster carer.
- Birth children and children 'looked after' group.
- Activities that are regularly arranged for carers, their families and young people in placement to meet together throughout the year in informal surroundings.
- Professional support for foster carers negotiating with schools and in the promotion of children's and young people's educational needs.
- A comprehensive post-approval training programme, including TSD Induction Standards.
- A level of financial support that values the skills and commitment of foster carers.
- Respite allowances and packages to ensure that foster carers have access to respite.

Regional Foster Placements believe that this package provides a positive way of ensuring that foster carers are fully supported and those 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.

Regional Foster Placements – East Anglia has been developed to meet the needs of looked after children in the region as identified by the commissioners. All policies and procedures currently in use within Regional Foster Placements are incorporated within the work of the Norwich branch.

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 or disability. The policy is 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. Specific training in relation to working with children as unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugee children is provided.

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 anti-discriminatory and anti-racist, 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) Ofsted

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting the Regional Fostering Placements regions, in England. They also receive and are responsible for investigating any complaints about the service provided by Regional Foster Placements. Significant incidents (Schedule 7, Regulation 35) are also reported to Ofsted.

Ofsted can be contacted at:

Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231



Our regional offices are:

East Anglia	South West	East Midlands	West Midlands
Regional Manager: Sara Rayner	Regional Manager: Mark Breeze	Regional Manager: Sharon North	Regional Manager and Agency Decision Maker:
Sapphire House Roundtree Way Norwich NR7 8SQ	Unit 3 Moorside Court, Yelverton Business Park, Yelverton, PL20 7PE (Head Office)	The Crammer Suite, St James Business Park, Radcliffe Road, Radcliffe on Trent, Nottingham, NG12 2JP	Blackpole Business
South Central	North West		Wales - CIW
Regional Manager and Agency Decision Maker: Liz Barnes Unit C3A Knoll Business Centre Old Shoreham Road Hove, East Sussex BN3 7GS	Regional Manager: Kola Singh Bridge Chapel Centre Heath Road Liverpool L19 4XR		Regional Manager: Amanda Davies Suite 5, 2 nd Floor Ty Kier Hardie Riverside Court Avenue De Clichy Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8LD

The Regional Managers in **Bold** noted on this page are the Registered Managers for their regions with Ofsted.

Kola Singh was appointed as the Regional Manager for the North West in April 2016, Kola's application for registration with Ofsted is currently ongoing.

There is also an office in Wales registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and the Registered Manager is Amanda Davies.



Appendix

