

Regional Foster Placements

“Sharing the caring”

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

South Central (Hove)

January 2018

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Statement of Purpose - Contents

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

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 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

The headquarters of the agency are in Exeter, with offices in Norwich, Worcester, Nottingham, Wales and East Sussex. There is also a new office in Liverpool.



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, Somerset TA9 4QF



Jo Catterall is the Responsible Individual and Director for the organisation.

Regional offices and Managers

Office Base	Manager	Ofsted No	Comments
Unit 3 Moorside Court Yelverton Business Park Crapstone Yelverton PL20 7PE	Mark Breeze Regional Manager	SC062999	
Sapphire House Roundtree Way Norwich NR7 8SQ	Sara Rayner Regional Manager	SC442774	
Blackpole Business Centre Blackpole Road Worcester WR3 8SQ	Jess Albrechtsen Regional Manager	SC450627	
The Cranmer Suite St James Business Park Radcliffe Road Radcliffe on Trent Nottingham NG12 2JP	Sharon North Regional Manager	SC486607	
Unit C3B2 Knoll Business Centre Old Shoreham Road Hove, East Sussex	Liz Barnes Regional Manager	1183032	
Regus House Malt House Avenue Cardiff Gate Business Park Pontprennau CF23 8RU	Amanda Davies Regional Manager	Registered with CSSIW 00009400073	
Bridge Chapel Centre Heath Road Liverpool L19 4XR	Kola Singh Regional Manager		Currently awaiting registration with Ofsted



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 take place on a monthly basis with practice meetings occurring bi-monthly.

South Central Staff Team

The current staffing Regional Foster Placements - East Sussex comprises of:-

Liz Barnes – Regional Manager. (BA Hons Social Work, BA Hons Social Studies, DIPSW, MA Leadership & Management in Health & Social Care)

Lorraine Allen – Senior Social Worker, (BA Hons Social Work)

Amanda Roxbee – Supervising Social Worker, (BA Hons Social Work)

Ann Smith – Regional Administrator (NVQ Business Administration, Dip Management)

Gail Rodd – Sessional Support Worker

(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.

We work to the Every Child Matters agenda:-

- **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 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.
- 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:-

- 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 are able to 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

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. Checks will then be undertaken which include:-



- verification of identity
- 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
- other agencies e.g. Early Years.

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.

Assessment 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.

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, 2-3 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 East Sussex Panel has a central list of 7 panel members which includes Independent Social Workers (4 including the Chair and Vice Chair), 2 Foster Carers, 1 Care Leaver, a Retired Nurse and a retired teacher. The age range of panel members is from 25 to 70 years. The Panel Chair is an experienced panel chair and a retired Director of an Independent Fostering Agency.

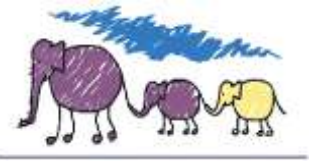
The content of the assessment report, excluding all confidential references, is shared with the applicant(s) and then presented to the Panel. The Regional Manager acts as Panel Advisor.

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 – East Sussex 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.

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 of 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 of our foster carers. At Regional Foster Placements we provide continuing training programs for our carers including a wide range of online training. Safeguarding, First Aid, Recording Skills, Complaints and Allegations, Equality and Diversity and Attachment training are considered mandatory and must be completed within the first year of fostering.

After the first year, foster carers are required to attend at least 3 training courses per annum in order to maintain their approval as carers for Regional Foster Placements.

All foster carers are supported in completing an annual personal professional development plan (PPDP) which also informs their annual review.

For 2017/2018, the training available at Regional Foster Placements, East Sussex, includes the following:-

- Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Child Protection/Safeguarding
- First Aid
- CSE
- Attachment
- Equality and Diversity
- Self Harm
- Record Keeping/Health & Safety
- Asylum Seekers
- Allegations
- Building Resilience in Children and Young People



- Female Genital Mutilation
- Enforced Marriage
- Internet Safety
- Food Hygiene
- De-escalating Anger
- Managing Stress (looking after yourself)
- Education of Looked after Children
- The Emotional Significance of Food
- Psychoactive Substances
- Social Media
- Therapeutic Communication

Foster carers are required to undertake the Training, Support and Development (TSD) training 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.

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 the Every Child Matters agenda. It also considers the Professional Development Plan for the foster carer.

Each annual review is presented to the agency's fostering Panel at the first year review following approval and then every year thereafter unless specific circumstances require a Panel review at



an earlier stage for example, following a Child Protection Investigation. All carers are encouraged to attend panel following their first annual review.

Policies & Procedures and other documentation

Once approved by the Panel, all foster carers receive an electronic Carer Handbook which includes the agency's Policies and Procedures and the Statement of Purpose. All carers sign a Foster Carer Agreement with the agency.

(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 on their own by Supervising Social Workers at regular visits.
- The 'What I Think' booklet is provided for the children and young people to complete ahead of the foster carer's review.
- 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 Comments procedures.
- Our aim is to build genuine relationships with children and young people so they feel they have another significant and trusted adult in their lives to talk to and support them.



(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 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.

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 recognition that the children and young people in our care will have experienced some level of early trauma and loss which can impact on their physical and mental wellbeing, Regional Foster Placements, East Sussex endeavours to provide a holistic service which often entails providing additional support as considered



necessary, with the agreement of the child's social worker. This can include:-

- Counselling for Carers
- Counselling for young people
- Direct work with children and young people
- Respite for foster carers

We have a sessional support worker able to provide direct work with all children and young people on issues such as developing confidence, dealing with peer relationships, dealing with bullying, managing emotions and behaviour, coping with contact etc. They can also be available to provide daytime breaks for foster carers.

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 families:-

- An out of hours service - 24 hours a day for 365 days of the year. This is personally manned by the Social Workers on the East Sussex team who will be known to the foster carers.
- A minimum of monthly formal supervision and support from a qualified Supervising Social Worker. Supervising Social Workers have a maximum caseload of 12, thus ensuring that we can provide good quality support to our foster carers.



- Regular direct and telephone contact from the Supervising Social Worker.
- Support Workers to work individually and collectively with children and young people
- A birth children's group that runs at least three times per year
- LAC children's days out
- Monthly foster carer support groups
- Family social activities are arranged at least four times a year to bring fostering families together
- Professional support for foster carers negotiating with schools and in the promotion of children's' and young peoples' educational needs (Dr Juliet Starbuck, Educational Psychologist)
- 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.

Equal opportunities and anti-discrimination

The agency's Equal Opportunity Policy aims to develop services on the basis of 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 with one effect of discrimination, children and young people can feel disempowered and deprived of



opportunities and services. All involved with the organisation have access to equality and diversity training.

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 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) 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 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 – South Central. 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



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