

Statement of **PURPOSE**



LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL



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Introduction

This document outlines the way that Nurture Fostering Ltd will operate as an independent fostering agency in England.

THIS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE IS AVAILABLE TO:

- Any person working for Nurture Fostering
- Our foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Children and young people who are placed with our foster carers and the parents of any such children or young people
- Local authorities and health and social care trusts
- Colleagues from other social care agencies
- The general public

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989 and The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011 and 2013)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England and Wales)

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

Nurture Fostering is an independent fostering agency providing a range of services for looked after children with our primary aim being to give children the opportunity to achieve their potential and to live fulfilling lives within the community.

The Agency operates in accordance with all current legislation.

The Registered Manager of the agency is a qualified, experienced and registered social work Manager who has gained a great deal of experience of working with both children and adults through fostering and child protection. This role is key to ensuring that the social work practice of the agency is delivered to a high standard.

We believe in high standard of care for children and gaining better outcomes for them, but this can only be achieved through supporting, encouraging and working in partnership with our foster carers. We will ensure that all foster carers are fully supported and engaged in our supervision, training and support plans and to ensure that we are available to our foster carers 24 hours a day 365/6 days of the year.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- To recruit foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds to enable us to offer appropriate placements
- A commitment to the ongoing training and development of our foster carers and employees
- A commitment to a child centred and inclusive approach
- Incorporating fostering and adoption & adult services
- To consider the gender and sexuality of fostered children when matching to placements
- To consider and respect the racial, cultural, religious and language background of the fostered child when matching

To support the foster carer and child in placement to reduce placement breakdowns. The aim of the Agency is to assist the placing authorities in meeting their requirements to improve the well-being of children in relation to the Five Outcomes for Children. These being:

- Physical, mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from harm and neglect
- Education training and recreation
- The contribution made by them to society
- Social and economic wellbeing

[Sec 10, Children Act 2004]

Ethos

Our ethos at Nurture Fostering is based upon our aspiration and the need to support and nurture children and young people in our care to enable them to grow and develop. Being that we are a family run fostering agency, we believe that this sense of family runs throughout the agency in all that we do.

We achieve this by providing high quality, safe and stable care for children and young people in a family setting offering them a sense of security and belonging to prepare them for permanency and/or independent living.

Our recruitment and selection of foster carers promotes diversity and is reflective of our matching by giving priority to the needs of children and providing appropriate care to meet their identified needs. Our robust matching reduces placement breakdown which can be disruptive and unsettling for both the child/young person and the fostering family. When recruiting new staff members such as supervising social workers, we strive to recruit people who have and will adopt our ethos within their working practice.

Children in care are amongst some the most vulnerable in society and once placed in the care of our foster carers we want them to grow within a nurturing environment and for us to be able to meet their health needs, wellbeing, aspirations and full potential.

Children live with families in all different guises with fostering families being one of them. The environment that children are nurtured in has a direct impact upon them both now and in later life. Our foster carers are trained and supported to understand the importance that their parenting plays in a child's life, no matter how long they are placed with them.

Family is the most important feature of being nurtured. Freud (1905) stated that events in our childhood have a great influence on our adult lives, shaping our personality. At Nurture Fostering, we want to be that positive influence to help and guide a child on their life journey.

This is achieved by offering our foster carers full support to deliver high quality care including:

- An ethos of working in partnership with them.
- Out of hours support and advice.
- Extensive training.
- Regular planned respite.
- Remuneration to reward the challenging role that they undertake.

By fully supporting, training and valuing our foster carers this assists Nurture Fostering in retaining its foster carers and they in turn become advocates for the agency.

We also build robust working partnerships with all of the professionals involved in decision making and by working with the children and young people placed with us, we ensure that they are heard and that their rights are protected and promoted.

IMPROVING THE OUTCOMES WILL BE ACHIEVED BY:

- Placing the child at the centre of all services provided
- Providing clear procedural guidance for staff and carers, which defines the Agency's services standards in a simple manner
- Consulting with service users and care receivers
- Recruiting carers and staff from a diversity of cultures and background to reflect the needs of service users
- Providing a service which is based on equal opportunities and is inclusive through valuing diversity
- Working in true partnership with all significant persons involved with the young person
- A commitment to ongoing training for staff and Foster Carers
- Providing the highest quality support to Foster Carers

It is the Agency's belief that the best outcomes for children will be achieved by making the best matches between the carer and child considering their values, ethnicity, culture and skills marrying them with the specific needs of each child. The agency prides itself on the levels of support it offers its carers.

SERVICE PROVISION

The Agency will continually strive to improve the services it offers and will not accept anything other than the highest

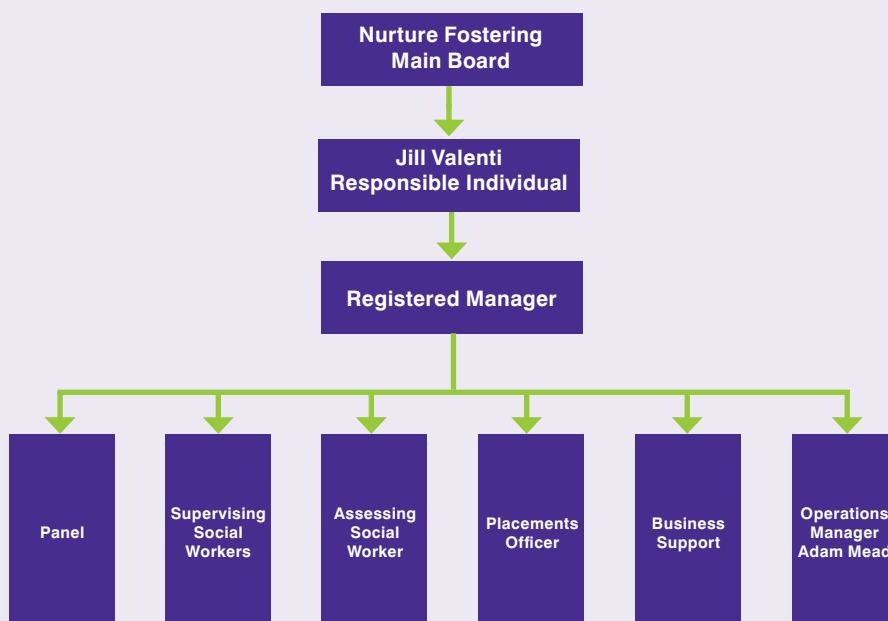
standards. An integral part of the quality review and quality improvement process involves previously looked after young people providing input, via consultation, involvement and activities throughout the design, implementation and delivery of the range of services expected to be provided.

- Assessment placements
- Respite placements
- Bridging placements
- Long-term placements
- Permanent placements
- Emergency placements
- Parent and child placements (with or without Assessment)
- Disability placements – We have a limited number of placements available with wheelchair access, we do also have a number of foster carers available to meet the needs of the children with learning disabilities.
- Short Term placements

We work with a number of local authorities and receive a high number of referrals daily. It is not unusual to contact you in the morning, match you with a child/ren and for them to be with you by the evening.

Every child is an individual and we will work with you to provide individualised care that allows the child to reach their full potential.

Organisational Structure



Roles and Responsibilities



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marcus Valenti and Jill Valenti are both Board Directors and their joint responsibility will be to ensure the quality assurance standards of the agency are maintained and to be responsible for the general strategic decisions of the agency, its operational and financial performance, business strategy and planning and policy development. Jill Valenti is the Director who holds the position of Responsible Individual.



THE REGISTERED MANAGER

The Registered Manager is accountable to and reports to the Board of Directors. They are responsible for the day-to-day running of the agency, ensuring that all the carers are given the right support and the outcomes for children are met through the implementation of the company's policies and procedures. They are responsible for specific areas of legislation under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and 2013 and the monitoring of standards for agency.

The Registered Manager is a qualified and experienced social worker, with significant experience in fostering and safeguarding. They hold direct management responsibility for the supervising social workers and the administration team. They will work closely alongside the Supervising Social Workers to ensure the service delivered is of the highest standard.



SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKERS

These are qualified Social Workers who are responsible for the direct implementation of the Agency's standards of service through supporting the Foster Carers and monitoring the progress of any child in placement. These Social Workers undertake on-call and duty functions to ensure that the carers are fully supported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They are employed on a full-time basis and are line managed by the Registered Manager. Supervising Social Workers will attend all meetings involving the child and carer to ensure that the carer is being fully supported and that the child's needs are being met.



ASSESSING SOCIAL WORKERS

These are qualified Social Workers who undertake thorough assessments on prospective Foster Carers using the British Association for Adoption and Fostering Form F format. They may be employed on an independent or full time basis dependent on the needs of the Agency.

Process for Recruiting and Assessing Foster Carers

Prospective carers are recruited through a variety of methods e.g. community events, advertising in local press or radio advertisements. Other carers may be recruited through recommendations of existing carers or staff employed by the Agency.

Applicants will be recruited from a diversity of ethnicities, geographical locations and personal backgrounds to ensure that the Agency can offer the best possible match against the needs of any child referred to the Agency. Candidates will not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race or disability. However, prospective Foster Carers must be able to meet the needs of any possible child placed within their approval categories.

All applicants must complete an initial screening process, this starts with a telephone screening interview to check the carers' availability for the fostering role and basic suitability of their home e.g. will the foster child have a suitably sized bedroom of their own. This is also the opportunity for potential carers to have answered any preliminary queries that they may have about fostering. A practitioner will visit the candidates' home to conduct a home screening visit following the telephone calls.

Potential Foster Carers will be required to complete an application form and consent to having checks undertaken on them to ascertain their suitability to foster. These checks will include:

- Verification of their identity and legal status within the UK.
- DBS checks on all adult household members.
- Local authority check.
- References.
- Enquiries to other agencies if applicable.

All applicants are required to undertake a medical examination conducted by their GP to ensure that they do not have any health issues that could affect their ability to foster. The medical reports will be sent to our Medical Advisor for her comment.

Applicants will be asked to identify three personal referees who will be asked to provide a written reference and be interviewed as part of the assessment process, one will need to be a family member.

A qualified social worker will undertake an assessment with 6-8 visits being made to gather information and evidence the applicant's suitability to foster. Information will be collected on all household members and the information gathered will form the basis of the fostering assessment (BAAF Form F).

All applicants must attend preparation training which includes information on their role and responsibilities as a foster carer for Nurture Fostering.

Once all the checks have been finalised and the foster carer has read and acknowledged the assessment the papers are deemed ready for panel.

All foster carers and their social workers will be invited to attend panel in order for their case to be heard and acknowledged.

The Foster Panel

The Fostering Panel is a task, which within the limits of legislation, is run as independently of the Agency as possible. It fulfils an important quality assurance function to ensure standards within the agency, with Foster Carers and in so doing, the service to young people is of a high and consistent standard.

FOSTERING PANEL / CHAIR

The Panel Chair is an independent person who is experienced in fostering. Their task is to manage all aspects of the fostering panel to ensure it is run in a fit and proper manner and within the standards set within National Minimum standards and the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.

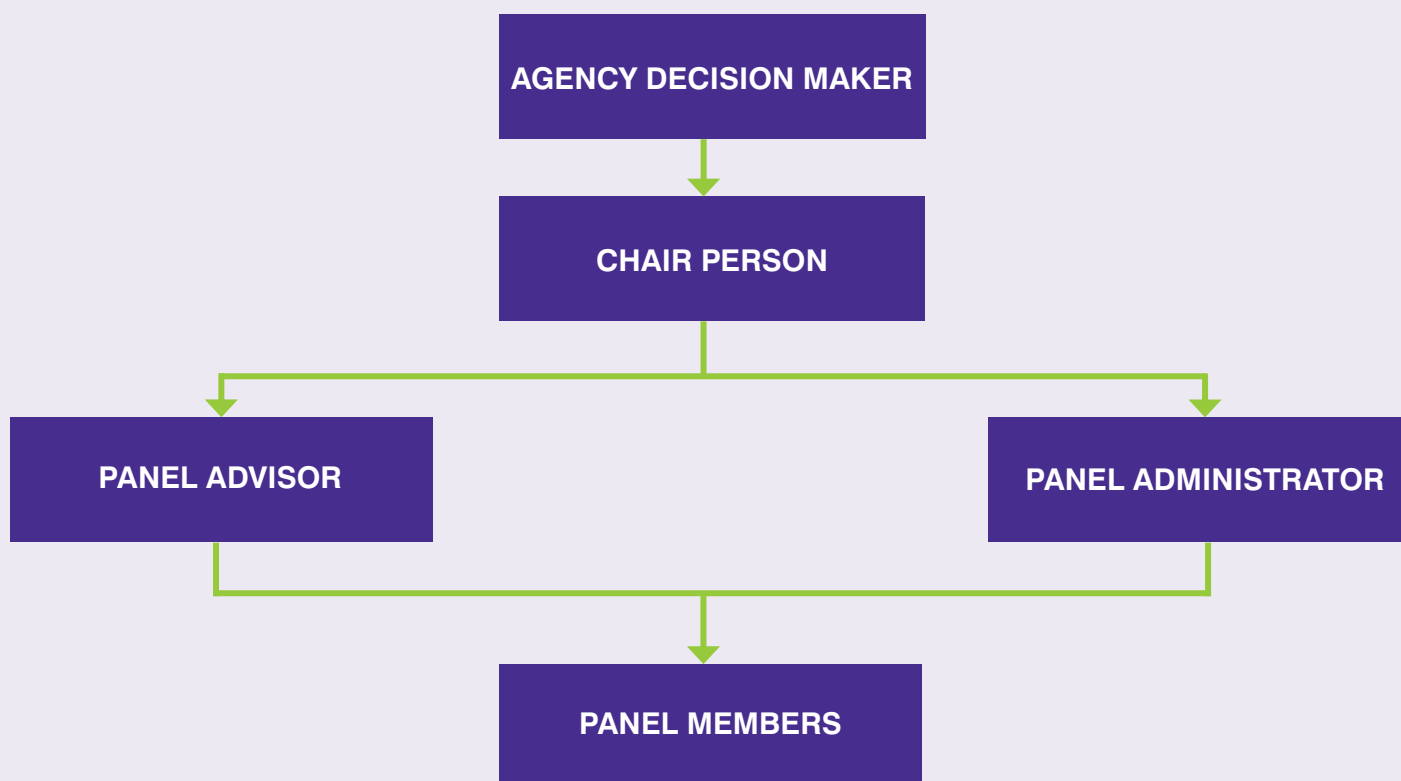
The role of the Panel is to make recommendations on

the approval of new Foster Carer applications, on the statutory review of Foster Carers, on the de-registration of Foster Carers and to act as part of the appeal process on complaints against the Agency or any of its representatives. The Panel will also be involved in monitoring quality standards and will contribute to the development of good practice.

THE PANEL

The panel comprises of up to seven people namely: panel chairperson, panel advisor, panel administrator and cohort of five people from a variety of different walks of life namely: foster carers, health, education, former looked after child. They will ask you a series of questions about your assessment and will then confirm a recommendation.

The Panel Structure



Meeting The Needs Of Children And Young People

To promote the concept of the “team around the looked after child” so that all the important adults and professionals involved with the child work together to achieve best outcomes for the child.

To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious faith and language of every child is recognised, valued and promoted when placement decisions are being made.

To identify what services may be needed at the start of a new placement to support the carer and ensure placement stability.

To enable a looked after child or young person to maintain and develop positive relationships with their birth families and other significant people.

To actively seek the views of young people regarding their placements and ensure they know where to obtain information and advice.

To work together with foster carers, social workers and education professionals to promote the educational achievements of looked after children.

To support foster carers in promoting the emotional and physical health of young people.

To fully meet the requirements of the Fostering Regulations, National Minimum Standards, corporate policy and accepted best practice standards.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Provide a clean and safe environment to meet the needs of the looked after child.

The team at Nurture Fostering will work with the foster carers and do everything within their power to ensure every child or young person can reach their full potential.

Nurture will match children and young people in foster families that celebrate and value their cultural, racial, ethnic and religious identity.

Children and young people have the right to continuity in their lives and every effort will be made to avoid unplanned placement moves

Looked after children and young people will be helped to maintain positive contact with birth family members and other significant people, where this is in their interests.

Foster care is a partnership between the carers, supervising social workers and the child or young person's social worker, working together for their best interests.

The fostering service will work in an open, positive and respectful way with children, their parents and extended families, foster carers, children's social workers and colleagues in schools and other agencies.

Formal decisions relating to individual children and young people in foster care should be taken in full consideration with them, their parents and their foster carers.

The fostering service will provide quality and consistency in the provision of training, support and information to foster carers to enable them to meet the individual needs of children and to develop their own skills as carers.

Placement Types

The fostering team receives a variety of different placement types from different Local Authorities across London, the South East, Surrey, Kent and Sussex.

1

SHORT TERM AND EMERGENCY FOSTERING

Short term foster carers look after a child or young person for a limited period of time while arrangements are made for the child to return to their birth family or to an alternative permanent placement.

Many children will return home to the care of their parents or members of their extended family while others may move to long term foster placements or become adopted. Short term foster carers play a crucial role in caring for children and young people who are going through a period of crisis and uncertainty, and preparing them for moving.

2

TEENAGE FOSTERING AND STAYING PUT PLACEMENTS

There is increasing recognition of the vulnerability of looked after teenagers. Carers may need specialist training in order to help them continue to provide a secure base and to help prepare young people for living independently. Such training will include Child Sexual Exploitation, managing challenging behaviour, promoting emotional and physical health, gang membership, and sexual health and relationships.

3

LONG TERM FOSTERING

For some children, particularly older children, who have significant relationships with birth parents or relatives, long term fostering may be a more appropriate placement choice than adoption. In these cases, existing foster carers can ask to be assessed as long-term (or permanent) carers for the child. Where this is approved, long term fostering provides the child or young person with a sense of security and stability. Long term foster carers usually support the child or young person in maintaining contact with their birth family, where this is consistent with their interests.

4

PARENT AND CHILD

Parent and child placements are a specialist type of fostering where a parent, usually a mother and baby, comes to stay with you at a time when they need extra support.

The parent might be having difficulties looking after their new baby, or need some extra help and advice so that they can do it well. Sometimes there might be concerns about drug or alcohol use, or it might be a learning difficulty or mental health problems that are making parenting difficult.

Rather than referring struggling parents to residential units to have their parenting assessed, a foster home can equip them with the extra parental support they may need. Going into foster care gives young families a much better chance of staying together.

Supporting Our Foster Carers

The Agency recognises that the quality of its services can only be met by having foster carers delivering high standards of care, who are well supported and trained.

The Agency has detailed policies and procedures on the supporting and training of carers which can be accessed via their website www.nurture-fostering.co.uk.

In summary carers have access to:

- An 'on call worker' 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Regular structured supervision from a qualified Social Worker.
- Support from their SSW at professional's meetings.
- Up to 21 days paid respite in addition to the normal allowances (see policy on allowances).
- Planned and structured telephone communication to and from their SSW.
- Wilful Damage Insurance.
- Regular programme of training delivered to meet carers' needs, both face to face and via e-learning
- Regular support group meetings.
- Access to NACCC Accredited contact centre for Supervised Contact.
- Becoming a member of a professional team and network of carers.
- Opportunities to be consulted on the function and operation of the Agency.
- Organised activities for children.
- Pre and post approval training programme.
- Financial reward that recognises the skills and experiences of the carers.
- Assistance in enrolling children in local schools, registering with GPs etc.
- Additional resources to support any child in placement.
- Individual membership to Fostering Network.
- Regular announced visits
- Annual reviews and feedback

SUPPORT TO FOSTER CARERS

Supervision of foster carers

Foster carers are supervised and supported by supervising social workers (SSW's). The SSW will visit at least every four weeks, and weekly when a child is

first placed, to help the foster carer meet the children's needs in placement. They will work jointly with the child's social worker to ensure that the child's health, education, leisure, identity, cultural, religious and racial needs are met, and to ensure that the carers are fully involved in planning and decision making for the children and young people placed with them.

SSW's will also monitor the carer's practice, speak regularly to the young people in placement, and agree a training and development plan with the carer. The SSW and the foster carer will have a supervision agreement which sets out how they will work together and how they will resolve differences or difficulties.

Foster Carer Support Groups

Foster carer support groups play an important role in enabling foster carers to develop their networks, obtain support and learn from the knowledge and experience of other carers. One of the experienced social workers in the fostering team has a special responsibility for supporting and developing foster carer support groups.

Nurture Foster Carers' Association (NFCA)

Foster carers also have their own organisation, the Nurture Foster Carer's Association. The purpose of NFCA is to promote fostering and to represent the views and needs of Nurture foster carers.

Training

Training is an integral part of the foster carer's role and begins during the preparation and assessment process. Nurture takes the development of foster carers very seriously and all carers are expected to attend ongoing and core training.

Financial Support

Nurture foster carers receive an age-related allowance, this can be paid weekly or monthly the choice is yours. The allowance is intended to be used to cover the day to day costs of caring for a child in placement, plus a reasonable contribution towards household expenses and the replacement of larger items such as furnishings and carpets.

Additional payments may be made following an assessment, if the costs of caring for a particular child exceeds the amount of the allowance. These are usually time limited and subject to regular review.

Respite Breaks

Nurture offers all carers 21 days respite a year should you require this.

Foster Carers' Handbook

The handbook contains information for foster carers regarding the expectations of foster carers and the support available to them. It also provides guidance with regard to child development, safeguarding, health and safety,

training and development and the statutory framework for fostering. This can be accessed via our website www.nurture-fostering.co.uk on our tri.x system.

Additional Services

Nurture Fostering recognises that the above items on their own do not necessarily mean that a person feels supported. By the nature of the role, Foster Carers will face demanding and challenging situations. The aim is to equip carers with the skills to deal with the majority of situations, but safe in the knowledge that support is readily accessible, if it is required.

Therapeutic Services

The agency is not restricted to in-house services and can offer a diverse range of therapies. The type and amount of therapy provided will be delivered according to the young person's assessed needs. The Agency is committed to maintaining the child's existing support networks wherever appropriate and possible.

Accessing Our Complaints Policy

The Agency has a full complaints policy and procedure which is available on request. It is the Agency's aim to deal with all complaints at the lowest appropriate level and whenever possible directly between the complainant and the subject of the complaint. However, it is recognised that this is not possible in all circumstances and there is a more formal process for making a complaint. The Agency welcomes feedback on its service standards to enable it to continually improve the service and support offered.

Complaints can be made directly to the Registered Manager or any Director. These can be made either in writing or verbally, however the Agency will always request that formal complaints are made in writing.

Complaints about the Registered Manager can be made either to the Responsible Individual or directly to Ofsted:

Telephone: 020 8690 9012

Or email: jill@nurture-fostering.co.uk



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