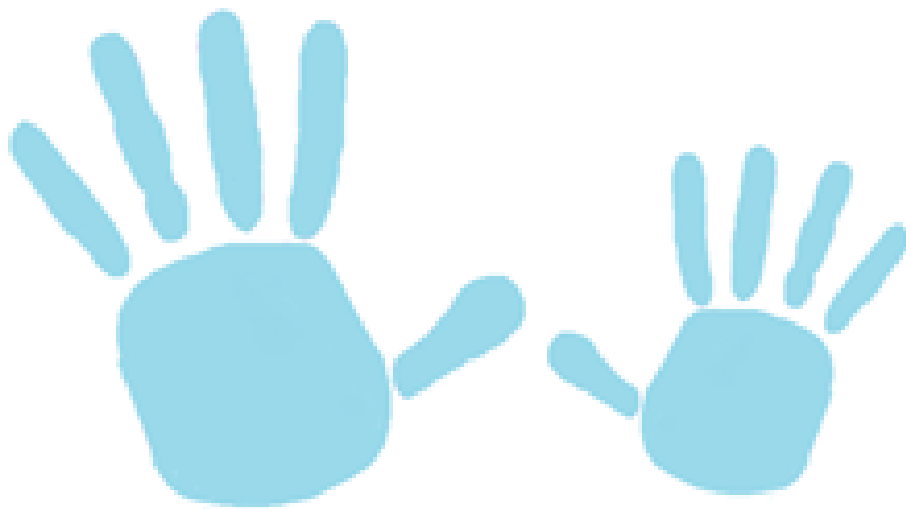


Statement of Purpose 2020-2021



PARAMOUNT
FOSTER CARE

“In pursuit of Excellence in Care”

Registered Office:

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Review date October 2021

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1. About us

Paramount Foster Care is an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and registered under the Companies Act 2006 (company number 10707917) and registered with Ofsted (registration number 2509967).

We are based at AGL House, 172 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 6QG.

2. Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose is produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 includes:

- **A statement of the aims and objectives of Paramount Foster Care.**
- **A statement as to the services and facilities provided by Paramount Foster Care**

This document has been developed in accordance with appropriate statute law and regulations, including:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 (and its later amendments)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 updated 2013
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England) 2011
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000

A copy of the Statement of Purpose will be made available to any person working for the fostering service, children and young people in our care, their parents, local authorities, prospective and current Foster Carers, social care establishments and any other person or company who would like to know more about our service. This Statement of Purpose is also available for perusal on our website.

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and revised annually or earlier if necessary. Ofsted will be notified regarding any such revision within 28 days. Copies of the revision will be made available to approved Foster Carers and children/young people placed by our agency.

3. Our Mission, Aims and Objectives

Paramount Foster Care's mission is to provide a high-quality fostering service for children/young people in care, their foster families and to responsible local authorities.

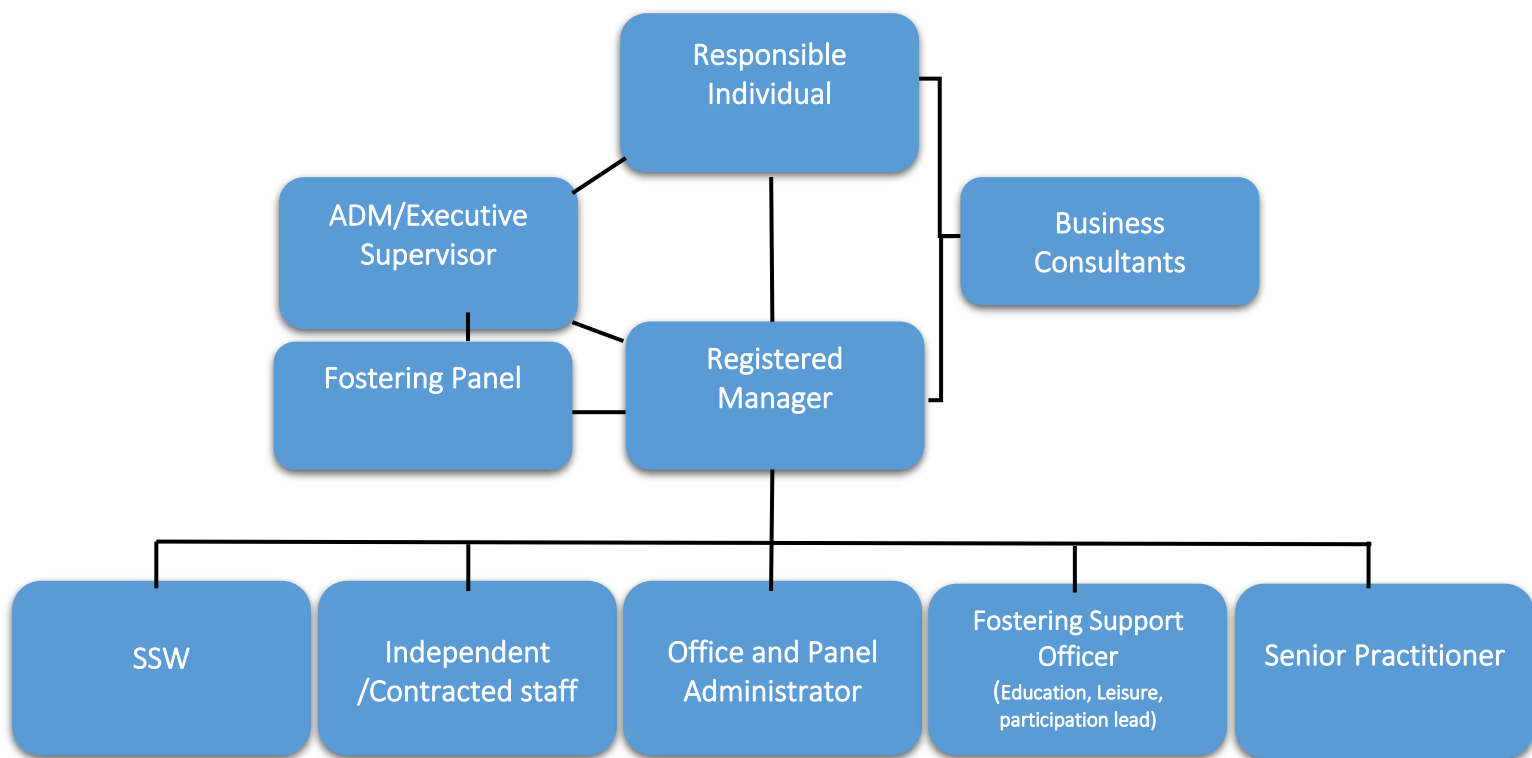
Our aim is to transform the lives of children and young people placed with our foster carers; enabling each child/young person to form secure attachments, build resilience, realise their unique potential and make progress whilst in placement.

Paramount Foster Care's objectives are to:

- Provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals in line with 'Every Child Matters'.
- Recruit, train and retain foster carers from diverse backgrounds; ensuring a range of appropriate placements are made for children and young people
- Ensure all foster carers have the guidance and support from a qualified Supervising Social Worker.
- Ensure careful matching to the needs of children and young people with suitable Foster Carers.
- Regularly ascertain the wishes and feelings of a child or young person, to promote participation and ensure they have a say in their care plan. We will always ensure that child/young person's views are gathered in order to develop our service provision.
- Promote contact with the birth family and significant others during a placement and to facilitate this as appropriate.
- Respect and promote the ethnical, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.
- Provide a high quality responsive and effective placement service, delivered through collaborative working, participation, consultation, compliance and performance.
- Engender a culture of continuous review and improvement.
- Create a positive workplace culture underpinned by open and transparent dialogue, continued learning and ongoing training.
- Be committed to offering training and development for our foster carers, and our wider staff; ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to deliver an excellent service.
- Adopt a culture which will reward and celebrate the good work of our staff, foster carers and children/young people in our care.

4. Paramount Foster Care Structure

The management activities are currently undertaken by the Registered Manager and overseen by the Responsible Individual.



5. Equality and Diversity

Committed to Equality, valuing Diversity and promoting Inclusion

At Paramount Foster Care, we recognise and celebrate the diverse society and communities in which we all live and work in. Our vision places equality at the heart of our approach to policy making, service delivery and employment.

We are fully committed to providing holistic services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all children and young people, foster families, colleagues, customers and any other stakeholders.

We provide equal opportunities for all and do not tolerate discrimination. We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment. Paramount Foster Care encourages applicants from all sectors of the community and this is reflected in our recruitment activity and literature.

6. Service Provision

Paramount Foster Care, working in partnership with local authorities will offer a wide range of suitably matched safe, secure, and appropriate foster care placements to children and young people. Our service provision will seek to offer the following placements:

Emergency placements

This is commonly known as same day placements (within 24 hours). Paramount Foster Care will accommodate 24/7, all year round emergency placements.

Short break / respite placements

Respite placements offer families, children and young people respite or a break from complex family dynamics. Well planned breaks may prevent disruptions to a placement or problems becoming too difficult to manage in the future. To support placement demands and needs, short breaks/respite will also be offered to our own Foster Carers.

Short-term placements

This placement can last a few days, weeks or months. A child or young person in this placement may be awaiting a more permanent placement with a long term foster family, adoption, move back with birth parents or move to assigned Guardians. In such placements, Paramount Foster Care and its carers will prepare children/young people for this transition.

Long-term Placements

This is where a child or young person is expected to remain in care until independence (usually 18 years). Paramount Foster Care will offer permanent placements for children and young people, where either adoption or rehabilitation to family is not an option. These placements will normally be provided by Foster Carers who have had experience as task-centered carers and have a good understanding of a child or young person's long term developmental needs. Long term placements will provide support for a young person up to gaining independence and beyond.

Solo placements

Paramount Foster Care will provide care for children and young people whose needs require a higher level of support and supervision, which precludes the placement of any other child or young person alongside. If requested and by arrangement with the placing authority, additional support services can be made available to such placements.

Sibling placements

Sibling placements are placed together in the same foster household. Paramount Foster Care recognise the importance of keeping families together, unless deemed inappropriate by the placing Local Authority. Paramount Foster Care will have carers' that have been assessed in having sufficient space, skills and qualities to accommodate this type of placement.

Placements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Paramount Foster Care will offer placements for young people who are deemed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers and where their residency status within the UK is yet to be determined. The agency will match UASC with carers' who have the skills and experience to care and support these young people.

Staying-Put arrangements

A Staying Put Arrangement enables young people to remain in their foster placement post 18 to support their transition into adulthood. Paramount Foster Care will provide support to the Foster Carer(s) in accommodating such requests.

Matching children and young people with foster families

Paramount Foster Care will carefully match placements with foster families. We will not suggest a placement if the assessed needs of the child/young person cannot reasonably be provided by the prospective Foster Carers'. The needs of any children or young people already in placement with Foster Carer(s) will also be considered. Foster carers will ultimately have the final say on whether they feel they can meet the needs of the proposed placement.

7. Recruitment and Approval of Foster Carers

Paramount Foster Care is committed to recruiting a diverse range of Foster Carers who can provide high quality care for looked after children. We have an on-going programme of recruitment using word of mouth, the internet, local advertisements and attendance to local events.

Enquiries and applications to foster are welcomed from people regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. We aim to recruit foster carers who share our ethos and demonstrate the key skills needed to holistically meet the needs of looked after young people.

During the assessment process of prospective applicants or as soon as possible after the assessment the applicants will be required to complete Skills to Foster training. Assessments on prospective Foster Carers are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. All information is held on file in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Following completion of the assessment, applicants are invited to attend a Fostering Panel with their assessor. The Fostering Panel comprises of a central list of members which include individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Applicants are informed immediately following their attendance at panel of the recommendation and the final decision is made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Applicants are notified within seven days. If the applicants are unhappy with the decision they have a right to appeal. This can be made directly to the agency or through Independent Review Mechanisms

8. Review of Foster Carers

In compliance with the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, all foster carers and their approval status is at least reviewed annually. The review determines whether approval of the carers should be renewed and / or whether there should be any changes made. If significant changes take place before this review, Paramount Foster Care will hold an additional review meeting. Some of the examples below are the reasons why this meeting would take before the scheduled review:

- Serious concerns or allegations made relating to a carers practice and section 47 investigations have not been pursued or the presentation of information surrounding a final strategy meeting post section 47 investigations.

- A breakdown between the approved foster carers, with one carer no longer residing at the approved household.
- Foster carers or agency requires an emergency change of approval.
- Serious illness or death of an approved foster carer.
- When the carers lifestyle has significantly changed, which has started to impact the carers fostering role/s
- Paramount Foster Care deciding that the fostering household is not working in partnership with the agency.

Prior to a panel review taking place, Paramount Foster Care's Social Worker will prepare a full report and obtain feedback from placing agencies, linked social workers, foster carers, children and young people, education staff and any other professional involved in the child's or young person's care.

The review also provides an opportunity for the carers to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. The review recommendation made by the panel will be presented to the ADM. The carer will then receive confirmation of their re-approval in writing a few days later.

9. Training for Foster Carers

At Paramount Foster Care we will provide an extensive range of training opportunities to benefit and develop our carers'. Our aim is to equip foster carers with the most effective tools possible to support children and young people in their care. Protection and welfare of children/young people placed with our foster carers will be paramount and our training programme will reflect this.

All foster carers will complete Skills to Foster training. Foster carers are also expected to complete their TSD standards within their first year.

Paramount Foster Care training portfolio covers the following areas:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Safer Caring including Allegations
- Communicating and Recording
- Positive Behavior
- Attachment and Bonding
- First Aid
- Working with professionals
- Safe-Handling and De-escalation
- Recording and Reporting
- Separation and Loss
- Supporting children and young people in Education
- E-Safety
- Administering of Medication
- Valuing Diversity
- Contact issues and working with birth parents
- Caring for UASC minors
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Radicalisation and Extremism
- Working with sexually abused children

- County lines
- Life Story work
- Moving children/young people on
- Parent and child assessment training
- Therapeutic Parenting - PACE training (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy)
- Calm Brain

For newly appointed carers, core induction training will require completion within the first year of initial approval. All carers are expected to attend an update on core training every three years. This will enable carers to keep up to date with key changes to relevant policies and guidelines.

Paramount Foster Care is also committed in providing bespoke courses, specific to the foster carers skills and interests, or relating to the particular needs of any child/young person in placement.

Paramount Foster Care's training courses will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they include the most up to date research and legislative changes.

10. Support for Foster Carers

Post panel, successful applicants will join a team of other foster families, where they will be supervised, supported and advised continually by a Supervising Social Worker (SSW).

Families will be frequently contacted by telephone and visited by the SSW at least every month. At least once per year, every foster family will receive unannounced visits to quality assure the continued quality and suitability of carers and their placements.

Paramount Foster Care will be committed to promoting foster carers participation in the above, in order to improve our service provision.

Support Out of Hours

Paramount Foster Care will offer a high level of personal, local support 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. This support in the first instance be provided by the allocated SSW. If, however the allocated SSW is unavailable then another SSW will be 'on call.' The Registered Manager will similarly be available out of office hours to support their staff and foster carers should a serious incident arise, or if required, offer general support, advice and guidance.

Support Group meetings

All foster carers will have access to a support group which will meet regularly and these will be facilitated by the Registered Manager and foster carer champion. Support groups provide a level of peer support, encourage peer to peer learning offer a platform to carers to raise topics of interest. Smaller scale 'seminar' style training will also be provided at these sessions and facilitated by Supervising Social Workers and invited guests.

Support Workers

Placement stability is very important to Paramount Foster Care. Support workers will provide extra support for carers and work closely with children and young people on a 1-1 or group basis. Support workers will also facilitate the young person council; a platform where children and young people's views and opinions will be captured to inform practice and agency development

Carer Mentors

If required, Paramount Foster Care will match experienced foster carers with newly recruited carers.

Carer Champions

Experienced foster carers or those that have additional skills around social work, education, therapeutic work, will have the opportunity to become Champion Carers and share their knowledge and expertise with other carers.

Membership to Fostering Network

Paramount Foster Care will provide membership to Fostering Network for every fostering household registered with the agency. Fostering Network provide independent support and advice for foster carers, including those facing allegations and complaints.

Further benefits of the Fostering Network's membership include:

- Legal expenses insurance cover
- 24-hour legal assistance
- Accountancy advice
- Counselling helpline
- Education Advisory Service

End of Year Celebrations

All foster carers will be invited to an end of year celebration which will mark the festive season. We will also provide recognition in the form of various awards to foster carers for their hard work, commitment and success throughout the year.

11. Specialist Support Services

At Paramount Foster Care we will help our carers to become therapeutic parents. Our approach will provide our foster carers the tools required to build resilience and transform the lives of children/young people in their care.

In addition, we would be looking to offer ways of working with the child/young person to help overcome any deep-seated anguish that they are experiencing, by providing one or more of the following:

- Art/Music Therapy
- Play Therapy
- Psychological Counselling
- Bereavement Counselling
- Life Story Work
- Peer Mentoring

12. Educational Support

At Paramount Foster Care we will aim for all our cared for children and young people to be happy at school, make friends and meet their educational goals. Every child/young person has a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is monitored by the school, social worker, virtual school head and the carer. Paramount Foster Care's Education Advisor will equip carers with the necessary skills in order for them to be able to support the child/young person's education. Our Education Advisor will also advocate or support carers on occasions where the child/young person's progress is limited or when additional funding is not used adequately to benefit the child/young person.

The agency will work in partnership with schools/carers to capture educational and social developmental milestones. Paramount Foster Care will offer additional services to enrich educational experiences and break down barriers to learning. Examples of these include:

- Researching suitable school placements and providing advocacy support for the child/young person to secure an appropriate educational provision.
- Supporting the child/young person's PEP and contributing to their reviews.
- Providing advocacy support when the child/young person is at risk of exclusion.
- Signposting of out of school/holiday enrichment/learning experiences.
- Supporting, schools and young people in their transition between schools and then into further education, employment and independent living.
- Signposting services for Gifted and Talented individuals to pursue or channel their talents in a positive way.
- Offer gifts or certificates for any child/young person's recognisable achievement not just those associated with success academically but other achievements that are less evident but equally worthy of acknowledging.
- Utilise education & therapeutic professionals to provide assistance directly to children or advice to our social workers.
- Giving foster carers advice and training on how to recognise the signs of bullying.

13. Support to Children and Young People

Each foster child/young person will receive a welcome pack and an age appropriate Children's Guide when they come into the care of our agency. They will also have the chance to meet their Supervising Social Worker (SSW) and discuss what is going well and what concerns they are having when moving into a new fostering household. In addition the following services are available for children and young people in our care:

- Support to find or pursue a hobby or interest.
- Participation in meetings
- Supervised or unsupervised contact with birth families as determined by the Local Authority.
- Support in carrying out Life Story Work.
- Specialist support and advice to be made available to child and carers who are supporting a child into Adoption.
- Offered Independent Advocacy Services, if required

- Partake in a Christmas activity and receive a Christmas present
- A day out for Foster children/young people and their Foster families

Participation

We are committed to ensuring children and young people's voices are heard and that their views are taken into account when decisions are made about them. We are passionate about involving our young people in the development of our service and we seek to ascertain their views in the following ways:

- Initial and Annual Feedback Forms
- Foster carers review of approval
- Social activities and participation groups
- A dedicated email address, haveyoursay@paramountfostercare.co.uk
- Social Worker Visits
- Unannounced visits
- Reviews/ Personal Education Plan Meetings

14. Finance

Foster carers will receive financial allowance in order to provide and support all the practical needs for a cared for child/young person. This is outlined in accordance with National Minimum Standards 2011 Standard 28. Some of the allocated allowance will be required to be spent on leisure, travel money, clothing, providing money etc. This expenditure outlay will need to be recorded. Where carers feel that a particular need cannot be met by the allowance, carers are asked to address this with their SSW.

Detailed financial information and guidance will be supplied to foster carers within their foster carer handbook and a detailed annual statement will be provided at the end of each financial year.

15. Quality Assurance

Paramount Foster Care shall maintain effective quality control measures and procedures to ensure that the service is supplied in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, National Minimum Standards 2011 and the Children Act 1989. Such systems shall include daily supervision and carrying out regular quality assurance audits.

Below are examples to a number of quality assurance measures that will be in place to regularly and diligently monitor the performance of Paramount Foster Care's service:

- Fostering panels will be chaired by an independent person and regular liaison will take place between the Chair of the Panel and the agency to identify any quality assurance issues and training requirements.
- All papers presented to the Panel will be quality assured by Registered Manager.
- Reviews of foster carers will be undertaken by their allocated SSW.
- Progress of agreed objectives within each of the five ECM outcomes will be monitored.
- Foster carers will have access to a complaints procedure.

- Regular file audits will be completed by the Registered Manager/Responsible Individual.
- Paramount Foster Care will undertake periodic satisfaction surveys of foster carers.
- The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people placed will be sought via a variety of communication channels.
- All staff will have regular supervision and annual performance appraisals.

16. Safeguarding Children and Young People

Paramount Foster Care's Safeguarding Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any child protection matter to the Registered Manager. The overriding aim is to ensure the protection of children/young people. The Registered Manager will seek to ascertain accurate details of any allegation and will liaise with the child's placing authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer and the area authority in which the foster carer(s) reside. A joint decision will be made about whether there is a need for further safeguarding action in respect to protecting the child or children. As a preventative measure, stringent checks are completed prior to foster carer's approval and employment of all staff and updated within legislative timescales. For full details please see or request a copy of our Safeguarding Policy.

17. Policies and Procedures

Paramount Foster Care policies and procedures are in line with current legislation regulations, National Minimum Standards and good practice guidance. These policies will be held centrally and made available to all our stakeholders.

Foster carers will have access to all the policies and procedures. These policies and procedures will be reviewed throughout the year and updated accordingly when changes take occur.

18. Comments, Complaints and Compliments

Paramount Foster Care will be committed to providing the highest level of care and services to children and young people, their foster families and the responsible authorities.

All comments, compliments and complaints provide vital information to inform the future policy, planning and development of the service as well as identifying the areas of the service which are successful and valued. They help to identify any gaps in service provision and should lead to the development of improved services. When something goes particularly well, or particularly badly, we need to know so that we can repeat successes and correct mistakes. Paramount Foster Care has a clear complaints procedure which is made available to staff, foster carers, children/young people and all stakeholders. All complaints and outcomes will be addressed thoroughly and recorded.

In all cases with allegations of abuse or neglect, the Local Authority Safeguarding Children procedures will be followed. The staff member or foster carer accused will be informed of the substance of an allegation as soon as possible and following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). However, there are

circumstances when information cannot be shared as it may compromise the investigation. Foster carers are strongly advised to access Fostering Network for support/advice in the event of an allegation.

Providing support for the Foster Carer's birth children will also be provided, regardless of whether the allegation has been made against them. Independent support should continue to be available until consideration of the case by the fostering panel has been completed. Support offered will include helping foster carers to understand the process, ensuring that they are given all appropriate information and assisting them in their communication with other agencies. Where a serious allegation is substantiated, due consideration will be given to whether this should be referred to Disclosure and Barring Service.

Essential Addresses and Contact Details

Paramount Foster Care

Registered Manager and Complaints Officer

Farzana Asghar
SMA House Office
172 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich
B70 6QG
Tel: 0121 582 4005

Email: fasghar@paramountfostercare.co.uk

Paramount Foster Care

Responsible Individual & Escalated Complaints Officer

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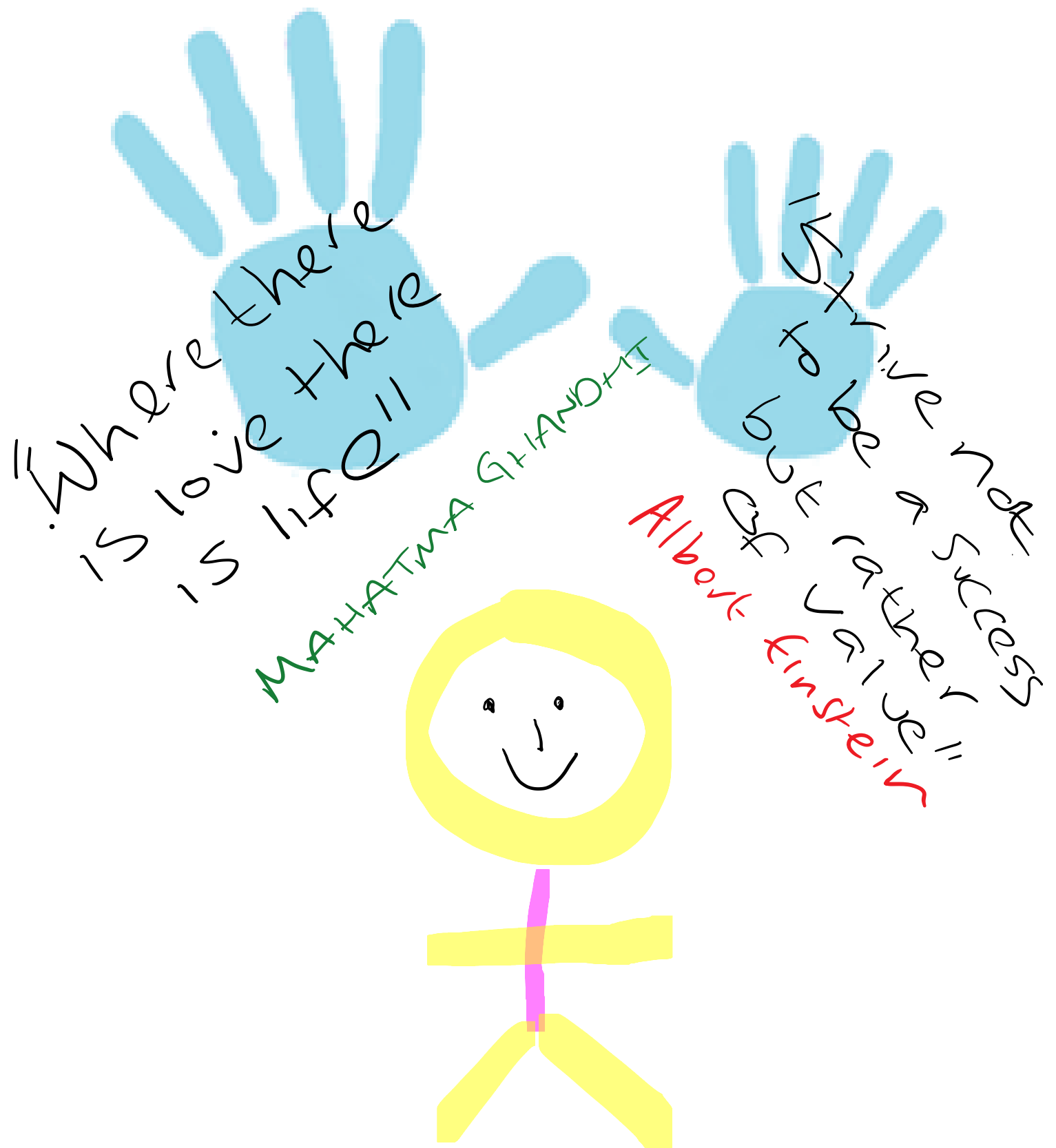
The Office of the Children's Commissioner

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Safeguarding Designated Officer

Registered Manager
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Paramount Foster Care

"In pursuit of Excellence in Care"