



Statement of Purpose

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Document Control

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Introduction

A copy of our Statement of Purpose provides information about The EPIC Family CIC, including the services offered by EPIC Fostering. The document is available on our website and is available in either hard copy or electronic versions upon request to:

- General public request
- Any person working for, or on behalf of The Group
- Local Authorities who place or who are looking to place children with our Foster Parents.
- Professionals who we work with for the purposes of fostering
- Ofsted
- Any child or young person (subject to their age and understanding) who is placed or part of any of our Fostering Families

The Statement of Purpose has been developed to meet the requirements of appropriate legislation, standards and guidance in relation to Fostering:

- The National Minimum Standards of Fostering Services (2011)
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol2: Care Planning, Placement & Case Review 2010
- The Fostering Service Regulations 2011, amended July 2103 and April 2014
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Parents: Amendment to the Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement, and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement, and Case Review and Fostering Services (Misc Amendments) Regulations 2013

Aims and Objectives of our Agency

To create a trusted, nurturing community that supports and values every child, foster family, and team member. We are dedicated to building a safe, inclusive space where everyone feels respected, cared for, and empowered to thrive.

The Agency will provide safe, secure, consistent environments which enable us to support and encourage Children and Young People to reach their full potential.

Our therapeutic approach across our Agency, along with our innovative desire to be creative in delivering relevant, targeted, effective services to meet specific identified needs for our fostering families. This embeds commitment from all professionals caring for children and young people within our organisation.

To promote and encourage Foster Parent involvement in Therapeutic Training, Empathic Listening Groups, and Recruitment.

We are committed to ensuring children are appropriately matched to suitably qualified fostering households who promote and embrace diversity, equality, cultural, racial and religious backgrounds of our children.

Foster Parents will be recruited from a wide range of diverse backgrounds, varied range of skills, and experience, in order to offer a broad range of matching opportunities.

We will recruit Foster Parents who can embrace and/or are open to Empathic & Therapeutic styles of parenting.

Company Status

EPIC Fostering is the trading name for our Fostering Agency which is owned by our Community Interest Company.

The EPIC Family Community Interest Company

Registered Company Number : **15764247**

Incorporated on : **6th June 2024**

Registered Address : 7a Market Street, Crediton EX17 2AJ

The EPIC Family CIC is a not-for-profit organisation where Directors are unable to draw Dividends, and profits are to remain reinvested in the group to benefit children and young people, through care, education, and social & emotional needs.

We are based in the South West and cover Local Authorities across; Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and Dorset. The EPIC Family Community Interest Company was founded in 2024 by Dan Boxall-Simpson who is the CEO and Founding Director, from the start.

EPIC Fostering is registered and inspected by Ofsted; Ofsted Registration Number : URN2828567

Organisation Structure

The EPIC Family CIC is managed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dan Boxall-Simpson

The Fostering Service is managed on a day-to-day basis by The Registered Manager.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is managed by the CEO, Founding Director.

The Registered Manager is managed by the Responsible Individual.

The Registered Manager manages and supervises the Team Managers. Where Team Managers are not yet appointed the Registered Manager manages and supervises the EPIC (Supervising) Social Workers.

The Team Managers (when appointed), supervise and manage the EPIC (Supervising) Social Workers.

The EPIC Child (Support) Workers are case managed/supervised by the allocated EPIC Social Workers.

The Training & Therapy Director is supervised by the Registered Manager.

The EPIC Listeners are supervised by the Training & Therapy Director.

The Community Engagement Director is managed by the CEO.

Our office and admin team are managed and supervised by the Community Engagement Director.

Team Recruitment

We use Safer Recruitment guidelines when recruiting both employed and independent individuals. We embrace a diverse team from varying backgrounds, qualifications, experience and skills. The Group undertakes Enhanced DBS checks which are renewed on a three year cycle.

All Team Members receive regular Empathic support, regular appropriate training, and supervision. There is a mandatory requirement for Social Workers to be registered with Social Work England for the duration of their employment with The EPIC Family CIC.

The EPIC Model

The EPIC model is based on a foundation of 'Empathic Professionals Investing in Children', meaning a therapeutic way of working runs throughout the way we practice.

Each Fostering Family is allocated a team of support;

- 1) EPIC (Supervising) Social Worker (ESSW)
- 2) EPIC (Child) Support Worker (ECSW)
- 3) EPIC Listener (EL)
- 4) EPIC Therapist (ET)

EPIC (Supervising) Social Worker (ESSW)

Responsible for overseeing the standards and quality of care offered to children and young people by our Fostering Families. They are responsible for all the statutory duties and obligations. The ESSW will have regular face to face visits with the Fostering Family, and there is an expectation that the child is also seen and spoken to during visits. The ESSW will have monthly personal and professional reflective supervision from their Line Manager.

EPIC (Child) Support Worker (ECSW)

To arrange special events and undertake targeted work in relation to individual child and young persons needs. The ECSW will obtain wishes and feelings from our Young People on a regular basis, hearing their voice. The ECSW will gather feedback as a contribution to annual reviews and are an additional support for the Fostering Household. ECSW's transport and supervise Family Time where appropriate.

EPIC Listener (EL)

An EL is introduced to Foster Parents as early as the Initial Assessment Stage. They will develop supportive relationships, being a peer guide and empathic listening ear for Foster Parents. EL's will have a minimum of weekly contact with their allocated Fostering Families. EL's will support Foster Parents being informed of any challenges and/or difficulties. The EL's are supervised and trained in attachment theory by the Training & Therapy Director.

EPIC Therapist (ET)

The ET will deliver trauma informed care advice and therapeutic parenting techniques such as the PACE model. They will also host regular monthly therapeutic groups, where knowledge is shared in a structured way. The ET will offer one to one consultations where there is individual needs for Foster Parents and/or Young People and Children.

Our Services

EPIC Fostering will comply fully with all relevant childcare legislation, including Fostering Regulations and the National Minimum Standards 2011.

We work in partnership with Local Authorities across the South West which includes the Peninsula Group, comprising of Devon, Torbay, Somerset and Plymouth City Councils and Cornwall County Council. We aim to provide a range of high quality fostering households that adequately meet the individual needs of all children and young people:

Short Term Fostering Family

Where children and young people require a matched family who are able to look after and meet their needs in the short term, not lasting more than 2 years. This is whilst longer term decisions are made regarding the child's longer term future. This is where the foster family are expected to support the next steps for the child's long term future.

Long Term Fostering Family

Where a child or young person requires long term permanence, security and stability, who are generally not able to remain within their previous home or family, but for where adoption isn't available or viable. Foster Parents will make a long term commitment to caring for the child, and the young person's care plan is for them to stay with the fostering family for the duration of their childhood.

Short Break Fostering

Foster Parents who are able to accommodate children and young people for a minimum of one weekend per month. The fostering household is expected to build positive, long term relationships with children and Foster Parents who benefit from having a safe sleepover provision to promote self care. Short breaks Foster Parents will receive specific medical training for any complex additional needs of any child that comes to stay with them and will have completed the specific TSDS relevant for the role.

Fostering Parent & Child

Foster Parents who are specifically trained to offer a safe space in their family home to support parent or parents with their children. The Foster Parents will nurture and offer guidance in positive parenting styles and skills within a family setting. In addition to the mandatory training, Foster Parents who are approved for parent & child will also undertake Adult Safeguarding & SIDS training.

Foster Parent Recruitment, Assessment, Approval, and Reviews

EPIC Fostering encourages enquiries via telephone or via our online form through social media or/and our website. An initial screening call will be completed where a decision will be made whether the potential Foster Parents should be offered the next step of a home visit. If the decision is not to proceed any further, then clear reasons for this will be given.

During the initial home visit, the EPIC representative will have a detailed discussion and what a commitment to fostering is about and whether the potential fostering household is likely to be suitable. The applicant(s) is expected to allow a full inspection of the family home. If a decision is not to proceed any further due to the applicants suitability, then clear reasons will be given.

If agreement to proceed, and Assessing Social Worker will be allocated to the potential Foster Family to complete a full assessment.

Stage 1 – Suitability of accommodation including Health & Safety Assessment, household members, DBS checks, references, health status, financial status, and current/previous relationships all explored. This stage is about collating facts about the potential fostering household.

Stage 2 – This stage explores skills, and suitability to care for vulnerable children and young people. The applicants strengths and vulnerabilities will be explored in detail, also highlighting areas where the applicants may need additional support.

EPIC Fostering will run stages 1 and 2 concurrently to minimise any potential for drift and delay, whilst maintaining rigorous QA processes.

Once the ASW has completed their report, the assessment will go through a final QA process prior to being presented to Foster Panel. The ASW will share their report with the applicants, where they will have an opportunity to check the report and add their own comments along with signing off that they are happy with the final report.

Applicants are expected to attend mandatory training before attending panel.

ESSW will write Foster Parents annual reviews within 11 months of initial approval, and within 11 months every year thereafter. The Foster Parents will contribute to the annual review report.

The ESSW will present a recommendation to Foster Panel for any changes in circumstances of the Fostering Household, any changes of approval, and/or deregistration where standards of care have been identified.

Foster Panel

EPIC Fostering maintains a central list of a diverse range of individuals who make up our Fostering Panel. Fostering Panel meets virtually on Microsoft Teams. Panel Members are knowledgeable in therapeutic parenting styles, bringing individual skills and experience. Social Work qualified, skilled therapeutic parents, care-experienced adults and education/health professionals make up our central panel list.

Foster Parent applications and reviews are structured as follows:

Initial Applications – all applications whether new to fostering or transfers from other local authorities/agencies, are presented to our Virtual Foster Panel. The applicants must attend.

First Annual Review – Approved Foster Parent first annual reviews are all presented to panel by their ESSW within 11 months of being approved. Foster Parents must also attend.

Annual Reviews – All Foster Parents will have an annual review within 11 months of their previous review. After their first annual review, their next review presented to panel will be 2 years after their first Panel Review, then every third year going forward in line with renewed DBS checks.

Additional Panel Reviews – Foster Parents will be presented to panel along with their ESSW's report for any changes in circumstances, and care concerns, or if they are subject to allegations. Any recommendations to changes of approval and/or deregistration will also be presented to Foster Panel.

Foster Panels Independent Recommendation will then go to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) with supporting paperwork and Panel minutes. The ADM will then confirm any decision in writing to the applicants/Foster Parents in writing within 10 working days.

Training and Development

Foster Parents start their training and continued professional development (CPD) journey during the initial assessment process, starting with Skills to Foster. Foster Parents are supported to complete the Training, Support and development Standards (TSDS) workbooks during their first year of approval.

Foster Parents receive a full induction course during the assessment process so that they can understand and fulfil the expectations of being a Foster Parent, the principles and values of looking after children, and to embed a commitment to their own development, training and support plan.

All Fostering households must undertake mandatory training within their first year of approval, and mandatory training renewed/kept up to date as appropriate and as detailed in their CPD Plan:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Equality & Diversity**
- **First Aid**
- **Therapeutic Parenting Training**

Training programmes are developed annually by The EPIC Family CIC, and are based on legislation, practice guidance, and the needs of the Foster Parent cohort. We offer face to face training, as well as online/virtual training through a mix of internal and external providers.

Our team members are similarly supported and encouraged to undertake CPD activities. Individual learning needs will be set out in the team members CPD Plan for the year ahead. All Social Worker employees will be required to complete the required CPD for their Social Work England Registration and maintain their annual re-registration.

Support & Supervision

EPIC Foster Parents are allocated their own EPIC Social Worker (ESSW). The ESSW is there to:

- 1) Build supportive relationship with the Fostering Household.
- 2) Be the primary point of contact for the Foster Parents. ESSW will be in regular contact with the Fostering Family through regular phone calls, emails, visits, and utilising our Initiative Care system. The frequency of visits and contact is based on the needs of the family, and the children residing with the family. Foster Parents should not feel alone dealing with difficult scenarios.
- 3) Be available to support the fostering family with day to day issues through listening and understanding while supporting practical solutions to cope with the challenges that fostering households face.
- 4) Attend planning meetings, review meetings, education meetings, and any other meetings to support the Foster Parents in their role.
- 5) Maintain contact with the children's Social Workers and liaise with other professionals offering services to the children or foster parents.
- 6) Ensure that all checks and unannounced visits are up to date as per our statutory obligations.
- 7) Undertake formal supervision as required. This includes ensuring that the Foster Parents are meeting their CPD obligations, adhering to Safer Care Plans, adhering to the Childs Care Plan. The ESSW should also be ensuring that the children and young people residing with the fostering family are having their health, emotional, educational, extra-curricular needs met.
- 8) Carry out Foster Parents formal reviews, presenting reports to the Fostering Panel along with their recommendation.
- 9) Undertake unannounced visits at least once per year.
- 10) Chair family stability and breakdown meetings.
- 11) Support children and young people who foster that love in the family home.
- 12) Undertake investigations into allegations and standards of care concerns.
- 13) Ensure that all children cared for by EPIC Fostering are receiving the high quality, therapeutic support that EPIC stands for.
- 14) Arrange where appropriate, and attend listening groups, recruitment activities and EPIC events.

Quality Assurance, Standards, and Monitoring

We are a child- centred organisation, and we understand that the whole team around our children and young people need to be nurtured, and supported in creating opportunities for the best outcomes for children. Our intended empathic culture is demonstrated through our use of kind language, which comes from a therapeutic approach in the way we operate.

Safeguarding is a top priority for everyone involved within our organisation. Everyone involved with working with children and young people are expected to complete appropriate Safeguarding Training which is regularly updated.

Strategies and support are in place to help Fostering Families understand the trauma behind behaviours as an early intervention. To assist in preventing Foster Parents from experiencing blocked care. We have a full team around each fostering Family to recognise and support where there are signs of compassion fatigue. This targeted support helps minimise any potential disruption to the Foster Children having to move Fostering Homes.

Compliance with our policies and procedures is monitored by the Management team in regular monthly supervision, as well as in audits. We have invested in Intuitive Care which manages our internal monitoring systems. The software enables efficient monitoring and retrieval of information, it assists us in the process of tracking and, monitoring each child, young person, and team members progress.

Consultation and Participation

It is important that children and young people's voices are heard, as well as gaining feedback from our teams that support the children including Foster Parents.

Children and young people are asked for their views regarding their fostering household through activity days, events, home visits by ESSW, and ECSW's. Feedback is gathered from birth families, foster parents, education professionals, health workers, and in any form that is child centred in the approach. Hearing the child's voice is a crucial part in the development of our service, and contributes to our policies and procedures.

Foster Parents can share their views about any aspect of our work at formal consultation meetings, through supervision at events, coffee mornings, and through their EL. Foster Parents can email or contact any member of the Management Team with ideas, feedback or concerns. Everyone including the CEO is contactable.

Foster Parents and children where appropriate are encouraged and supported to be involved in the organising of events, activity days and recruitment events. Foster Parents and Foster Children where appropriate will be given the opportunity to support interviews for team members, and be involved in new Foster Parent Training days.

Complaints

Concerns and complaints are managed in accordance with our Complaints Policy and Procedure. These will be dealt with promptly and fairly, in a transparent way. Where possible, EPIC Fostering will aim to resolve complaints informally, though where this is not possible, the formal Complaints process will be triggered.

Where Complaints are dealt with using the formal process, we acknowledge the importance of allowing for an examination by someone not directly involved in the person(s) involved. In accordance with the Fostering Regulations, a record of any complaint shall be kept and closely monitored by the Directors.

Ofsted are responsible for ensuring we adhere to current regulations, standards and best practice guidelines. If you want to make a complaint directly to Ofsted, you can contact them:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD 0300 123 1231

Or Email them at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Ofsted Whistle-blower hotline is : 0300 123 3155.