

First for Fostering Limited

Statement of Purpose

V25.03

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First for Fostering Limited, 181 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co Durham, DL3 8DE.

Tel: 01325 978040

Contents

1. Mission statement and Values
2. Our Vision, Aims and Objectives
3. Legislative context
4. Status and constitution
5. Service registration details
6. Organisational structure and staffing
7. Services provided
8. Recruitment, Approval, Panel, Matching and the Review process
9. Support for foster carers
10. Training and development
11. Consultation and participation
12. Monitoring and evaluation
13. Complaints, compliments, allegations and whistleblowing
14. Safeguarding
15. Equality and diversity
16. Regulation and inspection



1. Mission statement and Values

Mission statement

First for Fostering will provide a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment for children in foster care to enable them to grow and thrive. We are aspirational for our children and young people. We care about the children and young people in our care as if they were our own children.



Our Values

First for Fostering has core values that we aim to incorporate into our practices.

Care

Nurturing and therapeutic approaches to childcare.

Understanding

Taking the time to listen and consider the different views involved in decision making processes.

Commitment

Support every step of the way for foster carers and children.

Quality

Going above and beyond minimum standards.

Respectful

Sensitive to differing needs, experiences, and feelings

Honesty

Open and transparent in all our working relationships.

Safety

Safety and security in foster placements is essential for children and young people to flourish.

Innovation

We will provide innovative services based on best practice and current research.

Engage

We will place the children and young people at the heart of everything we do, we will hear their voices and respect their experiences.

2. Vision, Aims and Objectives

Vision

First for Fostering is a child focused fostering agency.

We will provide regular and consistent supervision for our foster carers. Support will be meaningful, accessible, and reflective. We will build a mutually respectful relationship with our foster carers and their families.

We will provide meaningful and tailored training packages for our foster carers.

We will support children and young people placed in our care to achieve their potential and participate and contribute positively to society.

We are aspirational for all our children and young people. We will celebrate their achievements.

We will develop and support our staff. We will provide regular training opportunities, reflective supervision and promote a healthy and happy workplace culture. We believe that work life balance is very important.

We will develop and maintain a fostering service which is continually learning and listening, that promotes participation and inclusion.



Aims

We are a small, established independent fostering agency in the Northeast of England.

We seek to ensure we are a child focused fostering agency. Our aim is that our practice and service delivery will ensure that children and young people are at the very heart of all our decision making. We will actively ensure we are an agency which listens to children and young people.

To provide children and young people with stable and secure fostering families that meet their needs. We aim to do this by recruiting highly motivated, resilient foster carers who can nurture and parent the most vulnerable children. We aim to provide high quality and meaningful support, supervision, and training opportunities to foster carers to enable them to develop a greater understanding of attachment, trauma, and secure base theory.

To provide leadership which is consistent and stable. Leadership that is both supportive but also appropriately challenging of practice where required. We strive to work to best practice and to be innovative in terms of service delivery. We seek a work culture that is open and reflective.

All our staff and foster carers are aspirational for the children and young people in our care, we want to see them achieve and fulfil their potential. We want to see happy and thriving children.

Our foster carers feel their role is fulfilling and enjoyable. That we as staff pride ourselves on making sure that the support offered is tailored to the needs of the fostering households.

To continue to demonstrate careful matching and provide support and training to ensure that foster carers are equipped to offer children safe, stable, supportive and nurturing environments.

As a small agency we want to know our foster carers as individuals, we want to celebrate with them their achievements as a fostering family and share the difficult times along the way.

Objectives

We endeavour to:

- * offer 24hrs support to foster carers and fostered children 365 days a year
- * work collaboratively and inclusively with our fostering families and encourage their participation
- * engender a culture which is responsive and able to learn and reflect on practice and service delivery
- * be transparent in our communications, working honestly and respectfully with all fostering families, children and young people, placing authorities and birth families
- * build positive and strong relationships with placing authorities
- * work to best practice and will keep ourselves up to date with relevant theory and changes in practice
- * meet the fostered child's individual needs and ensure the best possible outcomes, in accordance with their Care Plans
- * support and develop foster children's identity – promoting relationships, contact with family & friends, which is in accordance with their individual Care Plans
- * promote all children's health and well-being, educational attendance, achievement and attainment
- * value diversity and promote equality – acknowledging children's cultural background, their gender, sexuality and any impairment they may have
- * to ensure we seek the views and wishes of foster children, whilst promoting their aspirations and supporting them to achieve these.

Our aims and objectives will be continually reviewed, will take account of any change in our practice or service and will centre around the fostering family and children in placement.

3. Legislative framework

Our Statement of Purpose has been written in accordance with the appropriate and relevant regulations, statutory guidance, and the National Minimum Standards, including:

- * The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Regulations 3 and 4
- * The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- * Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011); Standard 16
- * The Care Planning Placement and Case Reviews and Fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 govern the work of fostering providers throughout England.
- * Care Standards Act 2000 – Principles are dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising potential and equality & diversity. Your right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times and enjoy a full range of social relationships.
- * Assessment & Approval of Foster Carers: Amendment to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations, Volume 4 Fostering Services (July 13)
- * The Children & Families Act 2014

As part of the regulatory requirement, a copy of the Statement of Purpose will be provided to the Chief Inspector within Ofsted and will be placed on our website:

<https://firstforfostering.co.uk>

The document is also available on request to all First for Fostering staff, placing authorities, foster carers, prospective foster carers, and parents of children placed. It can also be made available as requested for any member of the public.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, a minimum of every twelve months.

A Children's Guide will be provided to all children and young people placed. We will ensure that it is made available in an appropriate format, taking into account a child or young person's individual needs and level of understanding.

4. Status and constitution

First for Fostering is a Private Limited Company (registered in England & Wales Company number 12381452).

Head Office Address: Office 14, 181 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co Durham, DL3 8DE.

Telephone: 01325 978040

Email: info@firstforfostering.co.uk

5. Service registration details

First for Fostering Limited.

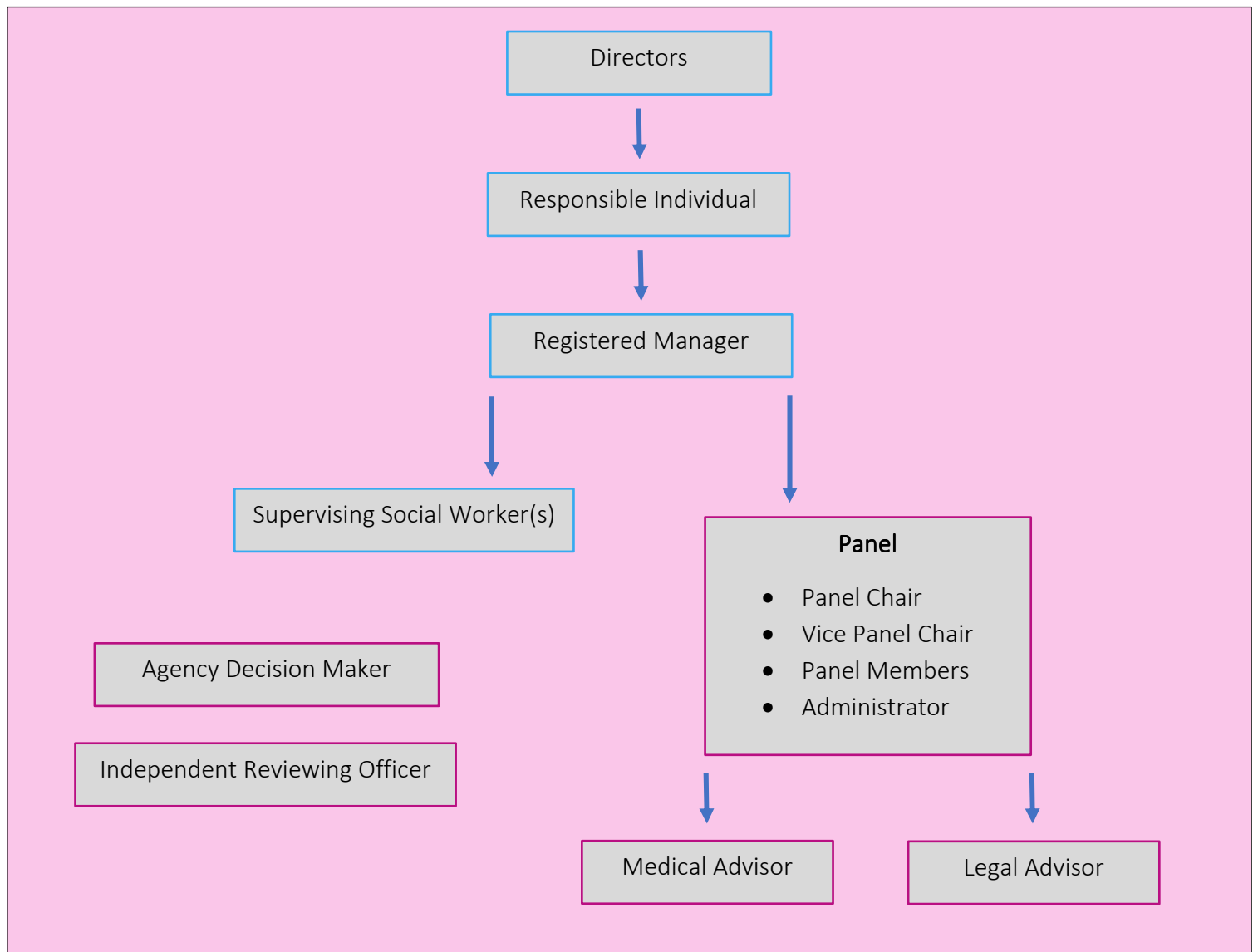
Office 14, 181 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co Durham, DL3 8DE

Tel: 01325 978040

Email: info@firstforfostering.co.uk



6. Organisational structure



Staffing

Responsible Individual –

Position currently vacant.

Oversight provided by a Rachel, Company Director.

Registered Manager - Lisa

Lisa joined the team in May 2024. She qualified as a Social Worker in 2004. Lisa has twenty years post qualifying Social Work experience in Social Work practice within Fostering & Children & Families sector. Upon qualifying Lisa worked within Children and Families Team and Children's Residential Services before starting her career as a Fostering Social Worker in 2006. She has worked in 3 North East based Independent Fostering Agencies between 2006 – 2024.

Supervising Social Worker - Laura

Laura holds a BA (Hons) Degree in Social Work which she gained at the University of Sunderland in 2022.

Since qualifying Laura has worked as a Social Worker in a local authority as part of the Children in our Care Team and working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, before taking up her current position as a Supervising Social Worker for First for Fostering.

Laura has worked in several residential settings and within education, working with pupils who were not able to access the curriculum or had disengaged from education due to special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with behavioural, social and emotional needs. Laura has been a foster carer for many years and currently has a long-term foster child living with her and her family.

Supervising Social Worker - Becky

Becky qualified as a social worker in 2008 and worked for 10 years in a Local Authority permanence team before moving into fostering in 2018. She has enjoyed supporting foster carers and adopters as a Senior Practitioner and has also taken the role of Independent Reviewing Officer for foster carers. She comes to First for Fostering on a part-time basis.

7. Services provided

We offer a range of different types of fostering households, for children and young people aged 0 – 18 years. We match carefully to ensure that each child or young person is placed with a fostering household who have the skills and ability to meet that child or young person's individual needs.

All children are unique in their experiences prior to being placed in foster care. Each child will have their own characteristics, interests, likes and dislikes.

Where placements can be planned, we recognise the importance of visits and meetings prior to the moving in date. We request all fostering families to share their 'Welcome Book' with the child or young person with the aim of alleviating some of their worries.

We offer the following types of fostering placements:

- *Long-term fostering homes (permanency)*

Long-term fostering homes offer children and young people the chance to live in a fostering home until adulthood and require a formal matching process, without the disruption of having to move again. The term, permanence is often used to describe this.

- *Short-term fostering homes*

These fostering homes can be for the duration of up to two years. Foster Carers welcome children into their home for a short-term period and are then usually involved in moving children on to either long-term foster carers or rehabilitating them back to parents or family members.

- *Sibling fostering homes*

Placing brothers and sisters together is a priority and we strive to do this where foster carers have the available bedroom space.

- *Parent and baby fostering homes*

This means foster carers who can provide a fostering home to a parent and baby where extra support and guidance is needed to ensure the baby is safe and well cared for and the parent is offered support and nurturing.

- *Emergency foster care*

Fostering families may be needed on an emergency basis, where there is no time for planned introductions. Considered matching is still essential even in an emergency situation.

- *Respite fostering homes*

Home away from home care involves caring for a child for a short period of time perhaps while the child and the foster parents take a break. Home away from home care can also be supporting a child within their birth family, providing Home away from Home provision on a regular or one-off basis for children, their parents or wider family where the social worker assesses this is beneficial.

- *Staying Put*

This means a young person remains living with their fostering family when they reach 18 years of age, however, the young person is no longer a looked after child after they reach 18 years of age. They are a young adult and a care leaver. They are entitled to support as a care leaver up to the age of 25 years and will be allocated a personal advisor.

A financial package is generally available for the family supporting the young person and this is normally discussed between the Local Authority, the family and the young person and a contract is drawn up and reviewed approximately every 6 months.

Geographically we can assess carers from Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton, and Sunderland. We will look on a case-by-case basis at foster carers from other geographical areas.

We aim to be flexible in meeting the diverse needs of both children, young people, and foster carers.



8. Recruitment, Approval, Panel, Matching and the Review process

Recruitment

There is a national shortage of foster carers in the UK. We recognise that it is teenagers and pre-teenagers who are in greatest need of fostering families. Our intention is to have a steady growth in the number of foster carers, this will be at a manageable rate to ensure good service is maintained and foster carers continue to receive excellent and personalised support and supervision enabling them to provide individualised and nurturing care for children.

We seek to recruit foster carers from a diverse range of backgrounds to ensure we can offer a good match for children and young people. We recruit carers of different ages, genders, family compositions and ethnic backgrounds.

We do not discriminate, and we welcome those that have experienced adversity/ being in care, as they often make the best carers.

We are stringent and methodical in our assessments of potential foster carers to ensure that we are offering safe and happy homes for children and young people. We use the Secure Base as the foundation for our assessments and ensure there is thoughtful, reflective, and rigorous analysis.

On Receiving an Enquiry

When a fostering enquiry is received to First for Fostering, one of our experienced team will call you to discuss the valued role of becoming a foster carer with us. You may have quite a lot of questions, which we can go through together. We will also ask some questions, this is normal, and something any fostering service would do, it is about gathering personal information about you, to ascertain if you meet our initial criteria and potentially progress to an initial Home Visit. Questions will include relationships, including past relationships, health, employment, criminal convictions.

Following the phone call, a decision is then made if a home visit would be appropriate. This is completed by a Supervising Social Worker and allows the potential applicant to ask questions about the fostering role and about First for Fostering. We are open and transparent with potential carers about what fostering involves: the rewards and the challenges. An initial visit form is completed.

Preparatory Training – Skills to Foster

This is mandatory for all potential foster carers which must be completed prior to approval. Skills to Foster introduces the First for Fostering ethos, the fostering task, as well as covering basic attachment and safeguarding principle.



Stage 1

Stage 1 of the assessment will involve all regulatory checks being undertaken; these will include, but are not limited to, DBS checks for all adult household members, medical check, employment references, at least 2 personal references, ex-partner checks, school references if there are school age children in the household. All children within the fostering family will be spoken with and their views ascertained. Previous fostering agencies (where applicable) and local authorities are contacted. First for Fostering have developed a guide for supporting birth children to understand what being a foster family can involve, this will be provided to the children in the home (if age appropriate).

First for Fostering know that having a strong and adaptable support network is essential for foster carers in enabling and supporting them in caring for children, especially in challenging times. As part of our assessment process, we will discuss prospective foster carers local support networks, and we will contact them to understand and verify the support they can offer, both practically and emotionally.

Stage 2

Stage 2 will consist of at least 8 sessions. Most of these sessions will take place in the applicant's home with at least one taking place within First for Fostering premises. This will enable the applicants to become familiar with the Agency and meet with other members of the team. It is important that foster carers are comfortable and confident in working outside their own home in preparation for meetings they will be required to attend, both with and on behalf of the children they care for. Carers may be asked as part of the process to undertake reading or tasks in preparation for the assessment visits. The assessment sessions will be led by the Supervising Social Worker but will be a collaborative partnership between the supervising social worker and the fostering family.

Panel process

On completion of the assessment, it will be considered at the First for Fostering Panel and a recommendation will be made. Panel will be a formal process, but we want to ensure potential carers are welcomed and put at ease. A panel book will be available in advance or on the day for applicants to familiarise themselves with the process and the panel members.

First for Fostering Panel is chaired by an independent and vastly experienced chairperson. Panel is also made up of members with a diverse range of personal experiences and professional backgrounds. The panel chair will ensure all panel members are supported in sharing their views and will support the panel in coming to a recommendation. All panel members will receive an annual appraisal and offered training.

Approval

Following Panel, the recommendation, alongside Panel minutes, will go to the Agency Decision Maker who will either approve the applicant or not. If the applicant is not approved, the applicant will have 28 days to appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

Once approved, the new foster carer will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker and a plan for training will be agreed. Foster carers are required to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards within the first twelve months, following approval. Alongside this they will be provided with; Attachment training, De-escalation training, Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid, Equality & Diversity and Medication Training.

Matching

We work with Local Authorities across the North East, Yorkshire and on occasions we look after children that are referred to us from outside of these areas.

As an agency we work in partnership with the local authorities to ensure that children and young people's needs will be met by our foster carers with the appropriate approach, experience, knowledge and skill.

To ensure we have a good understanding of the individual child's needs and background, which will allow us to ensure that the matching process is as successful as possible, we gain as much information as possible from the placing Authority.

We work to ensure that all referrals are carefully matched with the skills and experience of our foster carers. Where more information is required for careful matching, we will always telephone the referring Local Authority for further information or have a discussion with the child's social worker.

Prior to a placement being agreed, the Registered Manager will hold a meeting with the Supervising Social Worker to look at the strengths and vulnerabilities of the possible match and ensure that appropriate support is in place. Any training needs that are apparent at that point will be addressed. Matching will be carefully recorded.

We will not accept placements where we do not feel that we are able to offer a positive match.

First for Fostering provides all children and young people with an age appropriate 'Hello Box' which contains small items to welcome a child, such as a blanket, sticker book and night light or for older children/ young people; an age-appropriate fleece blanket, notebook, and pens. The box will then double as a memory box for foster carers and children to place mementos such as tickets, photos, and cards. An age-appropriate Children's Guide is also provided.

Review process

Foster carers will be reviewed annually following their initial approval. It may be necessary in some circumstances to complete a review sooner than this if there has been a significant change in the foster carer's circumstances; if there are concerns around practice; or if there has been a serious incident or allegation.

The review makes a recommendation whether the foster carer remains a foster carer for the Agency and whether the original terms of approval are to remain the same or need amending. The skills and abilities and any vulnerabilities, new or previously assessed, of the foster carers should be included. The views of the Supervising Social Worker, foster carer, children in the household, fostered children, and the placed child's Social Worker should all be represented. If appropriate, birth parent views should be sought. Any concerns, practice issues or training needs need to be carefully considered in the review.

Following the first annual review it will be brought back before panel and as a minimum every three years following this. Any significant practice issues or concerns regarding approval should be referred to panel.



9. Support for foster carers

- A named Supervising Social Worker

All foster carers are allocated a named Supervising Social Worker who is their point of contact, and who will build a supportive relationship with the fostering family. The Supervising Social Worker will maintain regular contact by video call, email, telephone, and home visits. The regularity of this will depend upon the needs of the foster carer and the fostered children.

- Support at meetings

The Supervising Social Worker will attend placement planning meetings, Fostered children's Reviews and other meetings alongside the foster carer.

- Regular supervision and support

As a minimum, all foster carers will receive monthly supervision. Supervision will be recorded and placed on the foster carer's records. It will be meaningful; it will be supportive and challenging as required. Support visits will be regular, particularly in the early period of placements and during challenging times.

- A fostering 'Buddy'

We aim to provide new foster carers with support by a 'buddying up' scheme where they are introduced to more experienced foster carers. This will provide peer support and enable a new foster carer to feel integrated with other carers and for the more experienced foster carer to be able to share their valuable experiences.

- Opportunities to develop skills and grow in confidence

Experienced foster carers will have the opportunity to be 'buddy's' for less experienced foster carers. They will also be offered opportunities to support at Skills to Foster and alongside facilitators at other training events.



- Paid respite

Foster carers will receive up to 16 days paid respite. This is important to allow carers a break from caring responsibilities and time to reflect.

- Discounts

Discounts are available from local businesses for foster carers.



- Together In Fostering' Support groups

First for Fostering's foster carers have named their group – 'Together in Fostering'.

Regular support groups are key to ensuring foster carers feel included within the Agency and that they become familiar with the other fostering families in their community.

Peer support is certainly not a substitute for professional and more formal means of support, but we recognise that making links with other foster carers is reassuring and empowering for carers. Support groups can also provide an opportunity for outside speakers to come in to share information and new services.

- Celebratory and family fun events

We want foster carers and their families to have the opportunity to come together and celebrate successes and feel proud of their fostering career and journey. We offer regular events. As an agency we want to create a fostering community that is supportive, visible, and empowered.

- Sons and Daughters activities

Fostering impacts the entire family and it is important that support is offered to the whole family. The Supervising Social Worker will support the sons and daughters of foster carers, being available for chats about any worries. We aim to hold regular activities for sons and daughters, such as age-appropriate outings. We will also use this as an opportunity to gather their feedback as to how they are feeling and any suggestions they have. This will be fed into service development.

- Fostering Handbook and online policy and procedure access

All First for Fostering, foster carers are provided with a copy of our Foster Carers Handbook. This can also be accessed by our specific foster carer log in on our website. This gives immediate access to fostering policies, procedures, forms and documentation.



- Meaningful training opportunities

Once approved, foster carers will develop a Personal Development Plan alongside their Supervising Social Worker. A range of training opportunities will be provided, alongside the mandatory training completed in the first year.

- Allowances and fees

Allowances above the recommended rate and fees which reward and value the professional role of the foster carer. Holiday and festival allowances are also paid.

11. Training and development

Fostering is hugely rewarding but we are also aware it can be, at times, very challenging. We strive to ensure our foster carers are well equipped for the role of caring and that they can be emotionally resilient when necessary. We want our carers to feel supported and empowered.

Within the first twelve months following approval we require foster carers to complete their Training and Development Standards (TDS) Workbook with the support of their Supervising Social Worker. The workbook covers a wide range of essential skills for foster carers and allows for discussion opportunities with the Supervising Social Worker and other foster carers. First for Fostering will also provide the below mandatory training for all foster carers within the first 12 months after approval:

- Attachment training
- De-escalation training
- Safeguarding
- Paediatric First Aid
- Equality and Diversity
- Medication
- Recording and Record Keeping.

Following this we expect all foster carers to continue to engage with training. With the support of their Supervising Social Worker, we require them to reflect, identify their strengths and vulnerabilities and to identify relevant training opportunities.



First for Fostering will provide access to a range of diverse training opportunities; we are keen to follow the needs and interests of our foster carers. We recognise that children and young people have differing behaviours and bring different challenges. All children and young people are unique. We understand that on occasion bespoke training packages will need to be sought and we endeavour to support these.

12. Consultation and participation

We seek to work in partnership with fostering families. The views of foster carers, children, young people, and wider family networks are key to informing our fostering practice.

We seek to work in partnership with fostering families. The views of foster carers, young people, and wider family networks are key in informing our fostering practice and ensuring positive outcomes.



Future service planning and delivery will be shaped by the continuous consultation and ongoing collaborative partnership we will build with our fostering families.

Consultation will take a number of different forms and be both informal and formal. We will hold regular fostering support groups for informal discussion and feedback. Our Supervising Social Workers, in their regular supervision and support visits, will seek the feedback from foster carers. We will also ask carers' views more formally in annual fostering reviews and in structured annual surveys.



Participation similarly will take several forms. We will make our foster carers central in our recruitment campaigns, using their voice and their lived experiences of the challenges and fulfilment the fostering role can bring. We will ask foster carers to come to recruitment events and share their experiences of the recruitment process, the support they receive and the fostering role.

New foster carers will be offered the opportunity to participate in our 'buddying up' scheme, buddied up with more experienced foster carers to strengthen support, increase their confidence and autonomy and to build within the Agency a feeling of mutual support and understanding. It is hoped these relationships can be mutually supportive and both foster carers benefit from feeling supported and having their own skills and confidence enhanced.

Our regular informal support groups are supported by Supervising Social Workers, but are run by, and for the benefit of, our foster carers. This participation allows foster carers to meet and share experiences, offer emotional or practical support and plan events. It is also a forum where the Agency can share information at times and seek consultation with foster carers.

None of this replaces the strong support of the Supervising Social Worker but it is our belief that foster carers can offer each other a differing network of support that can be both practice and emotional.

We aim to offer a 'Sons and Daughters Group' for the children of foster carers. It is important that these children and young people, are offered opportunities for peer support and, importantly, to have fun and spend time with other children and young people, who share the experience of growing up in a fostering household.

Sharing your parents can sometimes be difficult and although there are many rewards which come with this, it is also, on occasion, difficult for the children in the household.

As an Agency, we have a responsibility to offer support to all children and young people in the household. At the start of the fostering process a member of the fostering team will visit. Sons and daughters will be asked how they feel about their parents fostering. It's important that children and young people feel involved in discussions and decisions about the family starting to foster.

As an Agency we will encourage children and young people who are part of the family to speak to either their parents, or a member of the team at First for Fostering about any worries as it is important that fostering is the right decision for all the family.

Participation will also be in the attendance at social events and activities that we will arrange and support. We anticipate these will be celebration and thank you events for fostering families. We will facilitate a supportive and family-oriented feel, holding events which can encompass the entire fostering family, children in placement and at times wider social networks. We hope that these events will enable fostering families to feel a strong sense of belonging and being part of a fostering community.

We also seek to consult with and encourage participation from the children and young people placed with our fostering families. We have appointed a care experienced young person for our fostering panel. We have developed a set of questions in consultation with children and young people which are asked of applicants who attend our fostering panel. We seek to hear the voice of children in care throughout all our practice and service development areas.

We are very keen to build strong relationships with placing authorities and will seek their feedback at all available opportunities to support our developing service.



13. Monitoring and evaluation

There are a range of processes in place at First for Fostering to ensure we are continually monitoring our service. We are a learning organisation, and we strive to be reflective in our practices. We have the following systems and mechanisms in place to ensure we are monitoring and evaluating all areas of our work on an ongoing basis.

These include:

Foster carers annual reviews. Annual reviews enable feedback from foster carers, children within the foster family, the child in placement as well as the child's social worker.

Supervising Social Workers receive monthly supervision and annual staff appraisals. Their feedback informs our service and our processes. We have developed a set of questions in consultation with children and young people which are asked of applicants who attend our fostering panel.

The Registered Manager meets monthly with the Responsible Individual to look at the service needs, findings from audits, and areas of practice. Particular attention is paid to areas of safeguarding and safeguarding is a standing agenda item.

The Registered Manager meets monthly with a Director to keep them up to date with developments. Again, safeguarding is a standing agenda item.

Monthly supervision of carers allows for the monitoring of placements and the foster carers practice. We actively encourage foster carers to engage with us in feeding back their experience of our service.

Feedback is received from carers regarding the training they would like and crucially the benefit of training they have attended and how this is utilised in their fostering role.

We request feedback from carers using bi-annual questionnaires to seek their views and satisfaction with the service they receive from us.

Formal feedback from other professionals is sought every six months as part of the monitoring and quality assurance cycle.

Feedback from local authorities at children's meetings is sought, for example Child in Foster Care reviews.

File Audits are completed regularly. Our audit framework is reflective of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. We use this to monitor the work we do and ensure we are always in line with legal and regulatory requirements. The framework ensures we are focusing on making improvements in the appropriate areas.

Feedback from panel members is collated following each panel and shared with Supervising Social Workers to continue to improve on quality.

External monitoring from regulatory bodies such as Ofsted.



14. Complaints, compliments, allegations and whistleblowing

First for Fostering takes complaints, allegations, and whistleblowing with the upmost seriousness.

Foster Carers are made aware of how to make a complaint and are given access to the relevant policies on joining First for Fostering. Our children and young people are told how to make a complaint in the Children's Guide that they receive, and have access through our website.

All complaints will be dealt with by either the Registered Manager or the Responsible Individual. If the complaint is about either the Registered Manager or the Responsible Individual, the complaint will be dealt with by a Director at board level.

Allegations are handled robustly but sensitively, and additional independent support is provided to foster families if an allegation is made against them. Foster carers are provided with independent support in the event of an allegation.

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and to improve the services that we offer, and we regularly review and monitor what we do and how we do it to assure the highest quality in every area of our service. We are transparent in our processes and are reflective in our approach to learning.

We are also very happy to receive any compliments from those we work with and use these to support and inform good practice and service provision.

Foster carers and children and young people are aware they can contact Ofsted at: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or telephone 0300 1231231.

Ofsted can also be contacted at:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Children in foster care can also contact the Children's commissioner.

The Children's commissioner for England is Dame Rachel de Souza

help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk or telephone 0800 5280731



15. Safeguarding

Safeguarding of the children and young people placed with our foster carers is of paramount importance to First for Fostering.

All foster carers and stakeholders have access to our child protection and safeguarding policy via our website. On request, other suitable versions can be provided.

All safeguarding concerns are acted upon immediately. Our safeguarding practices are in line with legislation and guidance and informed by local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.

Allegations are dealt with in a robust manner, following guidance and procedure. We aim to be sensitive and respectful in our approach.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in all supervisions and monthly meetings between the Registered Manager, Responsible Individual and Directors.

16. Equality and diversity

First for Fostering have an unwavering commitment to equality and diversity in all areas of our service.

No employee, foster carer, child, or young person will be disadvantaged because of race, gender, disability, sexuality, or any other background factor.

We will not accept any language or conduct that is racist, sexist, transphobic, or homophobic. Any discriminatory behaviours will be challenged and dealt with appropriately.



17. Regulation and inspection

First for Fostering are regulated under; the Children Act 1989, the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Fostering Services regulations 2011 and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 as amended by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

We are registered and inspected as an independent fostering agency with Ofsted.

