



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2026

*"I find the FF team very efficient,
proactive, reliable and trustworthy"*

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1. Introduction

The Fostering Foundation (TFF) is an independent fostering agency providing fostering services for children and young people across the South West and surrounding areas. This Statement of Purpose sets out who we are, the values and principles which underpin our work, the services we provide and the arrangements we have in place to safeguard children, support foster carers and promote positive outcomes. The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the regulatory framework governing fostering services in England, including:

The Care Standards Act 2000; The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, as amended; The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011; The Children Act 1989; The Children and Families Act 2014; The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, as amended; Children Act 1989 statutory guidance, including Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Volume 4: Fostering Services; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026; Relevant statutory guidance relating to information sharing, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The Statement of Purpose is kept under regular review and updated where there are significant changes to the organisation, legislation, regulation or services provided. TFF ensures that its fostering service is operated consistently with its Statement of Purpose. The Statement is available to:

children and young people; foster carers and prospective foster carers; parents and those with parental responsibility; staff and people working on behalf of TFF; placing local authorities; professionals working alongside the agency; Ofsted; members of the public.

A child-friendly Children's Guide is also provided to children placed with TFF foster carers, taking account of their age and understanding. The Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 also inform our work. Relevant legislation and guidance are applied in their current amended form.

2 About The Fostering Foundation

The Fostering Foundation Limited is a private limited company, company number 06445595, registered and inspected by Ofsted under registration number 1378486. Corporate governance includes oversight of the organisation's strategy, resources and financial sustainability.

The Fostering Foundation was established in 2000 and is an independent fostering agency registered and inspected by Ofsted.

TFF has developed as a regional service while retaining the personalised approach and strong relationships associated with a smaller fostering agency. We aim for children, foster carers and professionals to know the people supporting them and to be able to access managers and staff when they need them. We believe successful fostering is built upon strong relationships, good communication, professional curiosity, appropriate challenge and a shared commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children.

"it has been challenging to balance fostering with the needs of our own children, but we value the agency input and support and are glad that we are with this agency"

TFF was established in 2000 by Geoffrey Lewis. The Board retains responsibility for strategic development, regulatory responsibilities of the registered provider, Responsible Individual or Registered Manager. TFF covers the areas within the map below.



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3 Our values aims and objectives

Our Values

Our practice is based upon the principle that every child has the right to feel safe, valued, listened to and cared for. We aim to provide fostering families where children experience warmth, stability, consistency and a sense of belonging. Our work is underpinned by the following principles:

Children first

The welfare, safety and individual needs of children are central to our decisions and practice.

Relationships matter

Children recover, grow and develop through safe, consistent and trusting relationships. We support foster carers to provide nurturing and trauma-informed care.

Children have a voice

Children should be listened to and involved in decisions affecting their lives. Their views should influence both their own care and the development of our service.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Staff and foster carers are expected to remain professionally curious, recognise changes in children's presentation and respond promptly to safeguarding concerns.

Individuality and identity matter

Children should be supported to understand and celebrate their identity, culture, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, sexuality, gender and family relationships.

“I am highly satisfied and happy to be part of TFF”

Partnership is essential

Good outcomes are most likely when children, foster carers, families, local authorities, schools, health professionals and TFF work openly and constructively together.

Learning improves practice

We use supervision, audits, complaints, incidents, allegations, feedback and outcomes to identify learning and continually improve the quality of our service.

Aims and Objectives

The Fostering Foundation aims to:

provide safe, stable and nurturing foster homes; promote children's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing; support children to achieve positive educational outcomes; promote children's relationships, identity, culture and sense of belonging; provide careful and informed matching between children and foster families; recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds with a wide range of skills and experience; provide foster carers with high-quality supervision, training and support; provide therapeutic and additional support where identified; promote placement stability and minimise avoidable disruption; listen to children and ensure their experiences influence their care and the development of the agency; work collaboratively with placing local authorities and other professionals; identify, assess and respond effectively to risk; maintain effective safeguarding arrangements; promote equality and actively challenge discrimination; provide effective leadership, management oversight and quality assurance; continually evaluate and improve the quality and impact of the services we provide; provide a responsive and accessible service to children, foster carers and placing authorities; ensure foster carers and staff have access to learning and development which reflects the needs of the children they support.

4 Equality identity and inclusion

TFF is committed to providing an inclusive and anti-discriminatory fostering service. Children and adults should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socioeconomic background or family circumstances. Children are supported to understand, explore and take pride in their identity. Matching and care planning consider how children's cultural, religious, linguistic and identity needs will be met. Foster carers are expected to promote children's identity and challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviour.

Staff and foster carers are expected to recognise and challenge racism, discrimination, prejudice and oppressive practice. Discriminatory incidents are taken seriously, recorded and responded to. TFF seeks to recruit a diverse range of foster carers and staff to increase the range of families, experiences and skills available to children requiring foster care. Where a child's needs cannot be fully met through direct matching, consideration is given to how those needs will be actively supported.

“Support is always excellent from The Fostering Foundation and my Supervising Social Worker goes above and beyond, not only offering support but advice and, where she can, solutions.”

5 Leadership governance and staff

Leadership Governance and Accountability

The Fostering Foundation has clear arrangements for governance, leadership and management. The Responsible Individual provides oversight of the organisation and ensures that the Registered Manager is supported and appropriately challenged in relation to the quality and effectiveness of the service. The Registered Manager has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the fostering service and for ensuring that the service operates in accordance with legislation, regulations, statutory guidance and the National Minimum Standards.

Team Managers provide operational management oversight of fostering practice and supervise staff within their areas of responsibility. Qualified Supervising Social Workers provide supervision, support and professional guidance to foster carers and maintain oversight of the experiences and progress of children living within TFF foster homes. TFF expects managers to be visible within practice and accessible to staff and foster carers. Management oversight is recorded where appropriate and is used to:

provide professional challenge; monitor safeguarding and risk; ensure significant information is appropriately responded to; track actions; monitor drift or delay; review the quality and impact of practice; ensure decisions remain focused upon children's welfare and outcomes.

The organisation's governance arrangements provide scrutiny of safeguarding, quality, performance, staffing, foster carer recruitment and retention, placement stability and service development. The Service Manager supports operational delivery and the Registered Manager's oversight of the service. Regional managers oversee their services and staff within the agreed management structure. Their responsibilities include staff supervision, scrutiny of safeguarding and risk decisions, audits, quality of assessments and reviews, training and support with investigations and performance improvement where required.

Staff

TFF employs appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver its fostering service. Qualified social workers are registered with Social Work England and are supported to maintain their professional registration and continuing professional development. The staffing structure includes:

Registered Manager and CEO; Service Manager; regional managers; Supervising Social Workers; therapeutic practitioners; Support Workers; Recruitment and Placements Officers; Business Support Officers; Quality Assurance Officer.

TFF is committed to maintaining manageable caseloads which enable Supervising Social Workers to provide meaningful support, supervision and oversight. Full-time Supervising Social Workers ordinarily hold fewer than 10 fostering households, with caseloads for part-time staff adjusted proportionately. Managers review caseloads regularly, taking account not simply of numbers but also:

complexity; children's needs; safeguarding issues; placement stability; foster carer support needs; geography and travel; additional responsibilities.

This enables SSWs to maintain regular contact with fostering families, undertake meaningful supervision, see children, attend relevant meetings, liaise with professional networks and respond when additional support is required. All staff receive regular supervision appropriate to their role. Supervision provides opportunities for:

reflection; safeguarding discussion; professional challenge; workload management; decision-making; learning and development; staff wellbeing.

Staff training and development needs are also considered through appraisal and continuing professional

development. Recruitment and employment practices promote safer recruitment and seek to ensure that people working with children and foster families are suitable to do so. Social workers bring experience across fostering, child protection, assessment, parent and child work and support for unaccompanied children. Specialist practitioners and independent professionals contribute within the limits of their qualifications and agreed roles. Newly qualified social workers receive reduced workloads, closer supervision and support from experienced colleagues. The Registered Manager receives external professional supervision. Offices provide space for staff, meetings and training, subject to local arrangements.

Leadership and regional staffing

The leadership team comprises Geoff Lewis, Responsible Individual; Joanna Killick, Registered Manager and Chief Executive Officer; Paul Woakes, Service Manager; Gemma Legg, Team Manager for Bristol and Exeter; and Dora Best, South West Manager. Donna Conway is Team Manager of the therapeutic team.

Seven Supervising Social Workers provide regional coverage: two in Bristol, two in Exeter and three in the South West. Gemma Legg manages the Bristol and Exeter teams, and Dora Best manages the South West team. All Supervising Social Workers are qualified social workers registered with Social Work England and have relevant professional experience.

The therapeutic team is led by Donna Conway as Team Manager and includes two Therapeutic Practitioners. One practitioner also undertakes support work alongside two additional Support Workers. This combined role is part of the same practitioner's post. The team works with children, carers and social workers to understand emotional needs and provide individually planned support.

Two Business Support Officers support administration and record management. One Quality Assurance Officer supports monitoring, scrutiny and service improvement. Three Recruitment and Placements Officers coordinate foster carer recruitment and placement referrals, working with social workers and managers to support informed matching.

Staff have qualifications, skills and experience appropriate to their responsibilities. Professional registration, suitability checks, qualifications and employment histories are maintained in personnel records. Supervision and continuing development support staff to apply their knowledge effectively in their work with children and carers.

"Such a great service, we couldn't ask for anything more..."

6 Our fostering services

TFF provides foster care for children and young people from birth to their eighteenth birthday. Where agreed, the agency also supports transition into Staying Put arrangements after 18. Parent and child arrangements may involve a parent who is under or over 18.

Short Term Fostering

Foster families provide care while assessments are completed and decisions are made about a child's longer-term care plan. Short-term arrangements vary considerably in length according to the child's circumstances and care plan.

Long Term Fostering

Long-term fostering provides children who cannot return to their birth families with stability, belonging and continuity throughout childhood and, where appropriate, into adulthood. Long-term matching considers the child's current and anticipated future needs and the foster family's ability to provide a lasting family environment.

Bridging Placements

Bridging placements provide children with care while plans are being made for their next stage of care. This may include supporting children to move to long-term fostering, adoption, reunification with family or towards independence. Foster carers undertaking bridging placements are supported to help children understand and prepare for transitions.

Parent and Child Placements

Specially assessed and trained foster carers provide care and support to parents and their children. Placements may involve parents who are themselves looked-after children or adults. The purpose and expectations of each placement are clearly identified and may include support, observation, guidance and contribution to assessment in accordance with the agreed placement plan. Carers support parents to develop confidence, routines and parenting skills while maintaining the safety and welfare of the child.

Sibling Placements

Where appropriate and consistent with children's individual welfare, TFF seeks to support siblings to live together. Matching considers both the individual and collective needs of the children and the foster family's capacity, accommodation and support network. Where siblings cannot safely live together, TFF supports plans which promote safe and meaningful relationships where this is consistent with their care plans.

Unaccompanied Children

TFF provides foster placements for unaccompanied children, including children seeking asylum. Carers are supported to understand children's experiences of separation, trauma, loss and migration and to meet cultural, linguistic, religious, identity, educational and practical needs.

Specialist and Enhanced Placements

TFF may provide enhanced packages of support for children whose experiences and needs require additional intervention. Support is individually planned and may include increased social work support, therapeutic consultation, direct work, support work, planned breaks or other resources agreed with the placing authority.

Staying Put

TFF supports Staying Put arrangements where a young person, their former foster carer and the responsible local authority agree that the young person should remain living within the fostering household after the age of 18. The transition from foster placement to Staying Put is planned with the young person, foster carer and local authority.

Planned Breaks

Planned breaks offer an agreed period of care with another suitable fostering household. They are planned around the child's needs, with current information about routines, relationships, health, risks and safer caring shared before the break. Back-up care arrangements are assessed and agreed before use, in line with TFF policy and the placing authority's plan.

7 Matching and placement planning

TFF recognises that effective matching is fundamental to children's safety, stability and wellbeing. Before recommending a placement, consideration is given to all available information about the child and prospective fostering household. In relation to the child, consideration includes:

history and previous care experiences; safeguarding and identified risks; physical and emotional health; education; family time and significant relationships; emotional and behavioural presentation; disability and additional needs; culture, ethnicity, language, religion and identity; wishes and feelings; existing care, risk and behavioural plans; hobbies, interests and strengths; transport and geographical considerations; plans for permanence.

In relation to the foster family, consideration includes:

terms of approval; skills and experience; training and knowledge; household composition; accommodation; birth children and other children living within the home; existing foster placements; pets; support network; cultural and identity considerations; location and ability to support education, family time and activities; capacity to meet the child's identified needs; potential impact of the placement upon everyone within the household.

In relation to support, consideration includes:

additional support required from TFF; therapeutic or support-worker involvement where applicable; support available from the placing local authority; education and health provision; planned breaks where appropriate; any identified gaps in matching and how these will be managed.

Foster carers receive all relevant information available to TFF to enable them to make an informed decision about whether they can meet a child's needs. Where information is incomplete, this is identified and further information sought wherever possible. Where a match proceeds with identified gaps, these should be clearly recorded alongside the arrangements for managing them. Foster carer profiles and other relevant information are made available to placing authorities as part of the matching process. Placement stability is regularly reviewed and additional support considered where emerging needs or pressures are identified.



8 Safeguarding risk management and safer caring

Safeguarding and Protecting Children

Safeguarding children is central to all aspects of TFF's work. All staff and foster carers share responsibility for recognising and responding to concerns about a child's safety or welfare. TFF maintains safeguarding procedures which provide clear guidance regarding:

allegations against foster carers or other adults; disclosures made by children; physical, emotional and sexual abuse; neglect; child sexual and criminal exploitation; online harm; trafficking and modern slavery; children who are missing or absent; self-harm and mental health concerns; domestic abuse; substance misuse; harmful sexual behaviour; radicalisation; peer-on-peer harm; contextual safeguarding; risks arising from family members or other known adults.

Staff and foster carers are expected to respond promptly to safeguarding information and share relevant information with the child's local authority and other safeguarding agencies. Where required, TFF will make referrals or notifications to the Local Authority Designated Officer, Ofsted, police, children's social care or other relevant agencies. Safeguarding decisions, actions and outcomes are clearly recorded. Managers provide oversight of significant safeguarding concerns and ensure agreed actions are followed through.

Safeguarding matters are monitored to identify patterns, themes, learning and any implications for individual children, foster carers or the wider service. Where there is professional disagreement or concern about another agency's response, TFF will use appropriate escalation and professional challenge processes. Children's safety takes precedence over professional hierarchy or organisational boundaries.

Risk Management and Safer Caring

TFF recognises that risk is dynamic and must be understood within the context of each child's experiences, development, relationships and environment. Individual risk assessments are completed where risks are identified. These consider risks to the child, risks presented by others and risks the child may present to themselves or other people. Risk assessments identify:

the nature and level of risk; relevant history and known incidents; triggers and patterns; vulnerabilities; protective factors; strategies to reduce or manage risk; roles and responsibilities; additional actions required.

The frequency of review is proportionate to the level and nature of risk. Risk assessments are also reviewed following significant incidents, new information or material changes in circumstances. Children have child-specific safer caring arrangements which reflect their history, vulnerabilities, developmental needs and household circumstances. Household safer caring arrangements are also maintained and reviewed with foster families. Foster carers are expected to understand and implement agreed risk-management and safer-caring strategies.

Risk management is not viewed simply as completion of documentation. Supervising Social Workers and managers consider whether identified strategies are being implemented, remain appropriate and are having the intended impact upon children's safety and wellbeing.

Risk Review Arrangements

TFF's review cycle includes an initial review following the first child looked-after review, then at least every six months for Green risks, every three months for Amber risks and monthly for Red risks. Significant incidents or new information prompt an earlier review. The SSW records the review date, shares the updated plan with carers and the placing social worker, and retains evidence of sharing and management oversight.

Supporting Positive Behaviour

TFF promotes trauma-informed, relational and restorative approaches to supporting children. We recognise

that behaviour is often a form of communication and may reflect experiences of trauma, loss, disrupted attachment, neurodiversity, sensory needs or other unmet needs. Foster carers are supported to understand what may sit behind a child's behaviour and to respond with curiosity, consistency, empathy and appropriate boundaries. Children should be supported to understand expectations and repair relationships following difficulties rather than experiencing punitive responses.

Corporal punishment is not permitted. Where a child's behaviour presents an immediate risk of harm, any intervention must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and consistent with the child's individual plan and TFF policy. Significant incidents are recorded and shared appropriately. Following significant incidents, consideration is given to:

the child's experience and views; known triggers; whether existing strategies were effective; whether risk assessments or safer caring plans require updating; whether additional support is required; learning for foster carers and professionals.

Professional Challenge and Escalation

TFF expects staff to work constructively and respectfully with partner agencies. Effective partnership working does not prevent professional challenge. Where TFF staff or foster carers are concerned that a child's needs are not being appropriately addressed, they are expected to raise this. This may include concerns regarding:

safeguarding responses; delay in decision-making; education; health provision; family time; placement support; care planning; permanence; services required to meet identified needs.

Concerns should initially be addressed through professional discussion wherever possible. Where concerns remain unresolved, staff should escalate them through management structures and relevant local multi-agency escalation arrangements. TFF managers support staff and foster carers to appropriately challenge drift, delay or decisions which may adversely affect children's safety, stability or outcomes. Professional challenge should be respectful, evidence-based and focused upon the child's welfare.

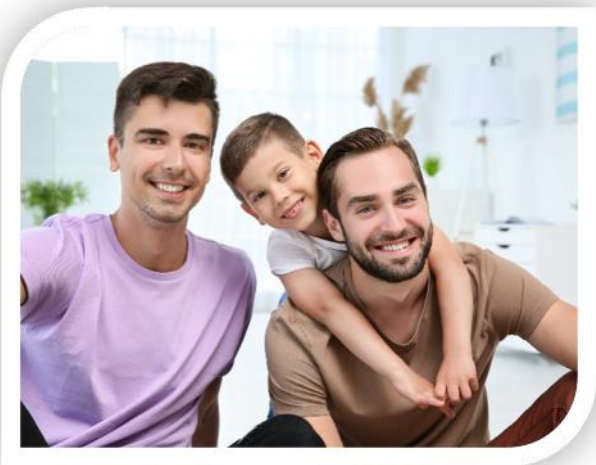
9 Support and supervision of foster carers

Support and Supervision of Foster Carers

Every fostering household is allocated a qualified Supervising Social Worker (SSW). The SSW is a key point of contact for the foster family and develops a supportive professional relationship with the foster carers, children in placement and, where appropriate, other members of the household. TFF aims to ensure foster carers do not feel isolated or unsupported when dealing with the challenges of fostering. Contact with foster carers includes supervision visits, telephone contact, email communication and additional visits or support according to the needs of the fostering family and children.

Supervising Social Workers will:

provide regular formal supervision; provide advice, support and professional challenge; support carers to implement children's care and placement plans; support carers following significant incidents or difficult periods; attend relevant meetings where appropriate, including placement planning meetings, Looked After



Children reviews and other professional meetings; maintain regular communication with children's social workers and other professionals; monitor statutory checks and household requirements; undertake or contribute to foster carer annual reviews; monitor safer caring and risk-management arrangements; support foster carers' training and professional development; ensure foster carers understand agency policies and expectations; support carers with recording and information sharing; consider the wellbeing and resilience of foster carers and their household; monitor the quality of care provided to children.

Supervision considers the foster carers, including:

family and household dynamics; wellbeing and resilience; training and development; support needs; significant changes in circumstances; ability to meet fostering responsibilities; record keeping; safer caring; relationships with professionals; areas of strength and areas requiring development.

Supervision also considers children in placement, including:

safety and safeguarding; physical and emotional wellbeing; education; health; family time; relationships within the fostering family; activities and interests; progress and achievements; independence skills; risks and vulnerabilities; wishes and feelings; progress against identified outcomes.

Supervising Social Workers see children as part of TFF's oversight of their experiences within the fostering household. Unannounced visits are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and TFF policy. Supervision should be reflective rather than solely task-focused and provide opportunities for foster carers and SSWs to consider what is happening for the child and how care is influencing the child's experience and outcomes. Carer logs are completed at the agreed frequency and reviewed by the SSW. They record the child's experiences, voice, achievements, health, family time and concerns, with factual and respectful language. Missing or delayed recordings are followed up, with support and escalation where required. Annual household checks and review of health and safety, pets, insurance and other relevant arrangements are monitored; the timing of DBS and medical updates follows current policy and suitability requirements.

Formal foster carer supervision is normally monthly, with additional contact according to need. Reflective discussion considers significant experiences selected by both the carer and SSW, their meaning for the child and what should change in response. Unannounced visits are undertaken in accordance with TFF policy and the National Minimum Standards.

Out of Hours Support

Foster carers have access to TFF support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Outside normal working hours, foster carers can contact TFF's out-of-hours service for advice and support. The service is provided by appropriately experienced staff with access to relevant information and management advice. Foster carers are expected to contact the service where urgent advice or support is required, including where safeguarding or significant incidents arise outside normal office hours. Significant matters arising out of hours are recorded and communicated to the relevant SSW and manager to ensure continuity, follow-up and appropriate safeguarding action.

Where necessary, the out-of-hours service will advise foster carers regarding contact with emergency services, children's social care or the relevant local authority emergency duty service.

Foster Carer Support and Financial Arrangements

TFF recognises that foster carers undertake a demanding and skilled role and require accessible, responsive support. In addition to their individual Supervising Social Worker, foster carers have access to a wider network of support. This includes:

24-hour out-of-hours support; support from managers; support groups; training and development; therapeutic consultation and support where appropriate; support-worker involvement where agreed; peer

support; activities and events; wider TFF staff support; membership of The Fostering Network and associated independent advice and support arrangements.

Support groups provide opportunities for foster carers to:

share experiences; learn from one another; discuss relevant practice issues; receive information; reduce isolation; contribute views regarding TFF services.

Specific support may also be developed for particular areas of fostering, including parent and child fostering, where appropriate. TFF may support newly approved carers to develop links with experienced foster carers or other peer-support arrangements.

Financial Arrangements

Foster carers receive clear information regarding:

- fees.
- allowances.
- payment arrangements.
- expectations regarding use of allowances.
- other relevant financial arrangements.

Financial information is made available to carers so expectations are transparent. The administration of financial payments is supported through external arrangements, with TFF retaining appropriate oversight and responsibility for ensuring agreed payments and financial processes are managed effectively. TFF recognises that effective practical, professional and financial support contributes directly to foster carer retention, placement stability and children's wellbeing.

10 Therapeutic and additional support

At TFF, we are T.R.U.S.T. Builders: Therapeutically Resourced and Underpinned by Support and Training. We recognise that many children entering foster care have experienced trauma, loss, abuse, neglect, disrupted attachments and adverse childhood experiences. Our therapeutic approach is informed by the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) and Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP), recognising that healing occurs through safe, nurturing relationships and developmentally appropriate support.

Our staff and foster carers are trained to work within the DDP attitude of PACE: Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. This enables them to look beyond behaviour, understand the underlying needs of children, and promote emotional regulation, resilience, positive relationships and placement stability.

TFF provides therapeutic consultation, direct work with children, therapeutically informed support, support-worker involvement, targeted interventions, and additional support during times of difficulty. Our therapeutic team works alongside Supervising Social Workers, foster parents and partner agencies to strengthen understanding of children's experiences and support positive outcomes.

Therapeutic training is provided to all staff members and foster parents, creating a consistent trauma-informed approach across the agency. A key element of this training is the promotion of self-care and reflective practice, which we view as essential to maintaining the emotional wellbeing, resilience and effectiveness of those caring for children who have experienced trauma.

All therapeutic and additional support is tailored to the individual needs of the child and fostering household. Support is planned, outcome-focused and regularly reviewed to ensure it is making a positive difference to the child, carers and overall family experience. DDP therapy can be provided with additional funding where required, and all staff work within their professional competencies, qualifications and agreed roles.

11 Recruitment assessment and approval

Foster Carer Recruitment

TFF seeks to recruit foster carers who can provide safe, nurturing and stable homes to children with a wide range of experiences and needs. We welcome applications from people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and family structures. Foster carer recruitment is led by TFF's Recruitment and Placements Officers, who work closely with the wider staff team. Recruitment activity is planned and monitored to support steady and sustainable growth and to develop a diverse range of fostering households able to meet the needs of children requiring placements.



Recruitment takes place through a variety of approaches which may include:

TFF's website; social media; community events; local advertising; information events; foster carer involvement and recommendations; other targeted recruitment activity.

TFF aims to provide realistic information about fostering so applicants understand both the rewards and responsibilities involved. Initial enquiries are responded to promptly. Potential applicants have the opportunity to speak with a member of the team to discuss fostering, their circumstances and initial suitability. Where appropriate, an initial/home visit is undertaken. This provides an opportunity to:

explore motivation; discuss fostering in greater depth; consider relevant experience; view the home environment; consider household composition; discuss practical considerations; answer questions; consider whether the household is ready to progress.

The decision about whether an enquiry progresses to application is informed by the information gathered during this process.

Assessment and Approval

TFF undertakes comprehensive assessments of prospective foster carers to ensure that applicants have the potential to provide safe, stable and nurturing care. Assessment follows the regulatory framework and relevant statutory guidance. TFF uses a two-stage assessment process, with stages managed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Stage One

Stage One includes the statutory and other checks required to consider applicants' suitability. These include, as applicable:

identity checks; Disclosure and Barring Service checks; checks on relevant adult household members; local authority checks; medical information and health assessment; employment references; personal references; previous fostering or adoption enquiries/applications; relevant previous partners; checks or references relating to previous work with children or vulnerable people; other checks considered necessary according to individual circumstances.

Information arising from checks is considered carefully and applicants are given opportunities to discuss relevant matters where appropriate.

Stage Two

Stage Two involves an in-depth assessment undertaken by an appropriately qualified and registered social worker. TFF's assessment is based upon the relevant fostering assessment framework and explores areas including:

childhood and family history; significant relationships; education and employment; physical and emotional health; parenting and caring experiences; relationships with birth children and other household members; support networks; accommodation and household circumstances; motivation to foster; understanding of trauma and children's experiences; safeguarding; safer caring; ability to promote education and health; identity, culture, equality and diversity; ability to work with birth families; ability to work as part of a professional network; resilience and emotional availability; capacity for reflection, learning and development; strengths and areas requiring further development.

Other household members, including children, are appropriately involved in the assessment. Applicants are expected to engage openly with the assessment process.

Preparation Training

Applicants undertake TFF's preparation training as part of their journey towards approval. Training provides opportunities to explore the realities of fostering and develop understanding of areas including:

children's experiences of care; trauma, attachment and loss; safeguarding; safer caring; identity and diversity; working with birth families; behaviour as communication; professional working; recording and confidentiality; the impact of fostering upon the whole household.

Feedback and learning from preparation training contribute to the overall assessment.

Assessment Outcome

Applicants have opportunities to read and comment upon their assessment in accordance with regulatory requirements. The completed assessment is presented to TFF's Fostering Panel. Applicants are encouraged to attend Panel with their assessing social worker. Panel makes a recommendation regarding suitability to foster and proposed terms of approval. The final decision is made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Approved foster carers receive written confirmation of their approval and terms of approval. Where a qualifying determination is made which the applicant does not agree with, applicants are informed of the routes available to make representations or seek review, including the Independent Review Mechanism where applicable.

The assessment is based on the CoramBAAF Form F framework. TFF ordinarily aims to complete assessment and approval in approximately four to five months, with the timetable agreed individually and quality taking precedence over speed. Stage One and Stage Two may run concurrently where appropriate under the assessment framework. Statutory checks must be completed and evaluated before approval. Applicants attend the three-day Foundations to Foster preparation programme. When a qualifying determination is issued, the written notification explains the applicable 28-day period and the choice of making representations to the agency or applying to the Independent Review Mechanism.

12 Fostering Panel and reviews

Fostering Panel

TFF has its own Fostering Panel, constituted in accordance with regulatory requirements. Panel meets regularly and provides independent scrutiny of matters within its functions. This includes considering:

- applications for approval as foster carers.
- foster carer reviews where required or referred.
- proposed changes to terms of approval where appropriate.
- other matters falling within Panel's functions which are referred by the agency.

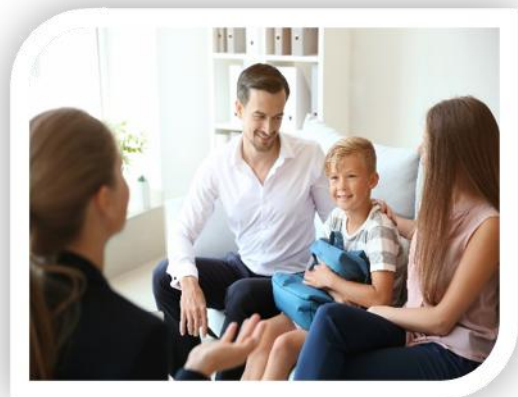
Panel membership draws upon a range of relevant professional and personal experience. This may include experience of fostering, social care, health, education and other areas relevant to children and families. Panel provides independent scrutiny and challenge and considers whether the information presented is sufficient to support its recommendation. Panel makes recommendations; the Agency Decision Maker makes the agency's final decision. Feedback from Panel is used to identify strengths and areas for development in assessment reports, review reports and wider fostering practice.

Panel is ordinarily scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month, with additional meetings arranged where necessary. The Panel Chair, Adviser and members contribute independent scrutiny within their respective roles. Panel recommendations and the ADM's reasons for decisions are recorded, with further information requested where necessary.

Foster Carer Reviews

Every foster carer's approval is reviewed at least annually and additionally where circumstances indicate that an earlier review is required. An early review may be considered following matters such as:

serious concerns regarding fostering practice; significant safeguarding concerns; allegations; standards of care concerns; significant changes within the fostering household; relationship changes; significant health matters; bereavement; changes which may affect carers' ability to foster; consideration of changes to terms of approval.



Reviews consider whether foster carers continue to be suitable to foster and whether their household remains suitable. They also consider whether the existing terms of approval continue to be appropriate. Evidence is gathered from a range of sources, including:

foster carers; Supervising Social Workers; children in placement; children's social workers and placing authorities; birth children and other household members; relevant professionals; education providers where appropriate; birth family where appropriate; training and development records; safeguarding information; complaints and allegations; significant incidents; outcomes for children.

The views and experiences of children are an important part of the review. TFF uses Independent Reviewing Social Workers (IRSWs) within its review arrangements to provide additional independence and scrutiny. Reviews are presented to TFF's Fostering Panel where required by regulation or where otherwise considered appropriate within TFF's review arrangements. The review process considers:

the quality of care provided; children's experiences and outcomes; foster carers' strengths; areas requiring further development; training and development; support needs; household circumstances; safeguarding and risk; whether terms of approval remain appropriate; plans for the forthcoming year.

Reviews should be reflective and evidence-based and consider not simply whether tasks have been completed, but the quality and impact of care being provided to children. The Agency Decision Maker makes the relevant final decision regarding continued approval and any changes to terms of approval. TFF's review arrangements include referral of the first review to Panel and subsequent reviews in line with regulation and agency policy. Under the existing TFF arrangement, the first and each subsequent third review are undertaken by the SSW and presented to Panel, with IRSWs undertaking other reviews. Earlier referrals are made when suitability, safeguarding or changes in approval require additional scrutiny.

13 Training and development

TFF regards foster carers as skilled and valued members of the professional network around children. Learning begins during assessment and continues throughout a foster carer's time with the agency.

Induction and TSD Standards

Following approval, foster carers receive induction and support to understand their responsibilities, TFF's expectations and the policies and procedures relevant to their role. New foster carers are supported to complete the

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within the first 12 months of approval, with support and progress monitored through supervision. Any delay requires a clear completion plan and management oversight. Supervising Social Workers support carers with this process and monitor progress.

Core and Mandatory Learning

Training includes core areas relevant to safe and effective fostering, including:

safeguarding; safer caring; first aid; equality, diversity and identity; record keeping; allegations; child exploitation; online safety; medication; behaviour support and de-escalation; trauma-informed practice; mental health and self-harm; family time/contact.

Additional training is provided according to the needs of individual children and fostering households. This may include learning relating to:

neurodiversity; harmful sexual behaviour; parent and child fostering; substance misuse; therapeutic parenting; attachment; preparation for independence; other identified areas.

Personal Development

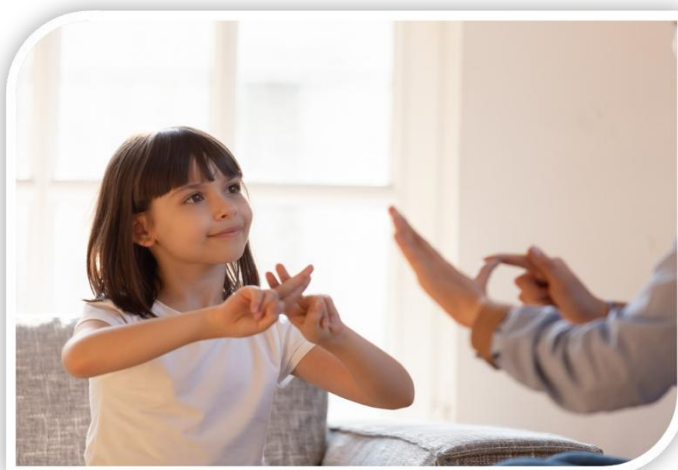
Training and development needs are considered through:

supervision; foster carer annual reviews; Personal Development Plans; children's placement needs; safeguarding incidents; allegations or standards of care concerns; audits and quality assurance; changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

Training is coordinated across TFF and delivered through a combination of internal learning and specialist external providers. Learning may be delivered face-to-face, online, through workshops, support groups, reflective discussion or other appropriate methods. TFF expects learning to influence practice. Supervising Social Workers therefore consider with carers how training has been understood and applied within their fostering role. Staff are similarly supported and expected to maintain their professional knowledge and continuing professional development.

Training Programme

The programme includes attachment, PACE, therapeutic parenting, resilience and managing stress, child protection, exploitation, digital wellbeing, education, first aid, health, gender identity, harmful behaviours,



“Superb training”

allegations, emotional regulation, positive behaviour support, sexual health and relationships, substance misuse and work with birth families. Mandatory refresher requirements are tracked. Practical barriers or learning needs are explored with carers so that support can be adapted and agreed training completed. Staff learning also includes reporting and recording, Schedule 6 monitoring and Schedule 7 notifications, professional challenge and evidence of effective management oversight.

14 Children and young people having a voice

Children's Voice and Participation

Children's views are fundamental to understanding the quality of care and support they receive. TFF seeks children's wishes and feelings in ways appropriate to their age, development, communication needs and preferences. Children should not have to communicate only through formal meetings or forms. TFF recognises that children may communicate more comfortably through relationships, activities, play, creative work or everyday conversations. Participation is supported through the following routes, with developing arrangements introduced as resources and implementation plans allow:

conversations with Supervising Social Workers; direct work; feedback for foster carer reviews; Children's Council; Young People's Panel; groups and events; activities; questionnaires and consultation; involvement in staff recruitment; involvement in foster carer recruitment and assessment; newsletters and child-friendly communication; feedback about TFF services.



TFF is developing a dedicated Child Practitioner role to further strengthen participation and provide children and young people with an accessible and trusted person within the agency. The Child Practitioner will support:

individual direct work; Children's Council; Young People's Panel; children's support groups; birth children's groups; activities and events; children's involvement in recruitment; consultation and feedback; children's newsletters; development of TFF's "You Said, We Did" approach.

The role is intended to provide children with a safe space and consistent relationship where they can talk,

participate and be heard. Children should be helped to understand how their views have influenced decisions. Where a child's wishes cannot be followed, this should be explained in a way they can understand. TFF supports children to understand their rights, including their right to advocacy, to complain and to speak with professionals independently. Carers also contribute through consultation, recruitment events, staff interview panels, co-delivery of training and support groups. Feedback from children, carers and placing authorities informs service planning. The developing Child Practitioner role is intended to provide a direct route for young people to contact the agency and will support Cornwall, Exeter and Bristol alongside existing staff arrangements.

Birth Children and Other Children in the Fostering Household

TFF recognises that fostering involves and affects the whole family. The contribution of foster carers' birth children and other children living within fostering households is valued. Their views and experiences are considered during:

- foster carer assessment.
- matching.
- supervision.
- annual reviews.
- significant changes within the household.

The impact upon existing children is considered before new placements are made. Birth children should have opportunities to talk about their experiences of fostering and access support where required. TFF's Child Practitioner role will further develop opportunities for birth children to participate in groups, activities and consultation and to access a trusted person outside their immediate family.

15 Education health and preparation for adulthood

TFF expects foster carers to promote children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, education, development and participation in everyday life.

Education

Foster carers are supported to:

promote regular school or college attendance; attend relevant educational meetings; support homework and learning; advocate for additional educational support where required; encourage aspirations and achievement; support children with transitions between education settings.

TFF staff work collaboratively with children's social workers, schools, virtual schools and other education professionals. Where there is drift or delay in securing appropriate educational provision, TFF will raise and, where necessary, escalate concerns.



Health and Wellbeing

Foster carers support children to access appropriate:

- medical care.
- dental care.
- optical care.
- specialist health services.
- emotional and mental health support.

Children are supported to develop age-appropriate understanding of their health and wellbeing.

Activities, Achievement and Independence

Children are encouraged to participate in hobbies, interests, friendships, activities and community life. Their achievements should be recognised and celebrated. As children grow older, foster carers support development of practical and emotional independence skills in accordance with individual needs and plans.

16 Policies records and information sharing

Accurate recording and appropriate information sharing are essential to safeguarding children. Staff and foster carers are expected to maintain records which are:

timely; factual; respectful; relevant; clear; child-focused.

Information is shared with other agencies where this is necessary and lawful to safeguard and promote children's welfare. TFF recognises that safeguarding children requires professionals to share relevant information and that concerns about confidentiality should not prevent appropriate safeguarding action. Foster carers receive guidance regarding confidentiality and the safe handling of information. Records are maintained securely and in accordance with data protection legislation and TFF policies. Children's records should reflect:

their experiences; progress; achievements; significant events; wishes and feelings; decisions affecting their lives; the reasons for significant professional decisions.

Recording should contribute to an understandable account of the child's life rather than simply recording professional activity.

Policies and Procedures

Staff and carers receive access to the policies relevant to their role, including safeguarding, reporting and recording, risk management, safer caring, supervision, out-of-hours support, confidentiality, professional differences, unannounced visits and planned breaks. Managers monitor understanding and implementation. Records on CHARMS include significant events, decisions, chronologies, children's outcomes and management oversight. Access is limited to authorised users and information is shared through appropriate secure arrangements.

17 Complaints concerns and representations

TFF welcomes feedback and takes concerns and complaints seriously. Children, foster carers, parents and others involved with the service should be able to raise concerns without fear that doing so will adversely affect the support or care they receive. Information about how to complain is made available. Where possible and appropriate, concerns will be addressed promptly and informally. Where informal resolution is not appropriate or does not resolve the issue, TFF's formal complaints procedure will be followed. Children are provided with information appropriate to their age and understanding about:

- how to raise a concern.
- how to make a complaint.
- who they can speak to within TFF.
- how to access independent advocacy.
- relevant external organisations.

Complaints are recorded and monitored. Themes and outcomes are considered to identify learning and opportunities to improve practice. Safeguarding concerns raised through a complaint are responded to through safeguarding procedures and are not delayed while a complaint investigation takes place. A complaint can be raised with the supervising social worker, a manager or TFF at info@fosteringfoundation.co.uk. If the concern involves the usual contact, an alternative manager or the Responsible Individual can be approached. The complaints policy explains the stages, response times and review arrangements. Children can ask a trusted adult or advocate to help. Ofsted can receive concerns about the service through www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. Immediate danger should be reported to emergency services.

18 Quality assurance monitoring and learning

Quality Assurance Monitoring and Learning

TFF is committed to understanding the quality and impact of the services it provides. Quality assurance is not limited to checking whether required documents are present. It considers whether practice is making a positive difference to children's:

safety; stability; wellbeing; experiences; progress; outcomes.

Quality-assurance activity includes:

case file audits; management oversight; monitoring safeguarding incidents; monitoring regulatory notifications; Schedule 6 and Schedule 7 monitoring where applicable; review of risk assessments; review of safer caring arrangements; monitoring allegations and standards of care matters; complaints monitoring; foster carer statutory checks; unannounced visits; supervision; staff appraisal; foster carer annual reviews; placement stability and disruption monitoring; children's feedback; foster carer feedback; local authority feedback; Panel feedback; training compliance; monitoring actions arising from audits and reviews; oversight of significant incidents and emerging risks.

Managers are expected to identify where practice requires improvement and ensure actions are:

- clear.
- proportionate.
- allocated.
- time-bound where appropriate.
- followed through.

Auditing considers the child's lived experience and the impact of professional intervention, rather than simply confirming that required documentation exists. Management oversight provides additional scrutiny of significant decisions, safeguarding concerns, risks and actions. Themes and learning are considered across the organisation so learning from one child, fostering household or incident can improve practice more widely. The Registered Manager and senior leaders use quality-assurance information to identify:

strengths; emerging risks; patterns and themes; areas requiring improvement; training needs; service-development priorities.

Governance arrangements provide organisational scrutiny and challenge regarding the quality and performance of the fostering service.

Strengthening Practice

TFF has strengthened the way managers scrutinise practice and follow up actions. Management oversight is recorded separately where needed, so the analysis, decision and next steps can be understood. Audits focus on the child's lived experience, the effectiveness of care and whether professional intervention is making a difference. This includes scrutiny of risk assessments, safer caring, supervision, chronologies and outcomes. The agency has worked across its children's and carers' files to identify gaps, agree actions and check progress. Audit findings are considered by managers and used to target support, training and policy updates. Improved audit ratings are tested against the quality of care and evidence of completed actions. Outstanding issues remain visible until they are resolved or there is a clear, reviewed plan for managing them.

Reflective supervision explores why an event occurred, what the child may have been communicating and whether the response helped. Staff and carers are encouraged to question assumptions, including whether supervised family time, an agreed activity or an existing plan is actually keeping the child safe. Managers support respectful challenge with local authorities where education, health, care planning or placement support is delayed. The agency's risk review cycle, clearer out-of-hours arrangements and staff learning on

significant events strengthen continuity between identifying a concern, taking action and checking the outcome. Evidence includes updated plans, records of information sharing, management decisions, supervision actions and children's feedback. These improvements are reviewed through ongoing monitoring and do not depend on a document being marked complete.

Monthly performance discussions and Registered Manager reports support scrutiny of placements, vacancies, recruitment, significant events and notifications, safeguarding, staffing, training, children's outcomes and improvement priorities. Panel receives information relevant to its functions. Case audits use RAG ratings with analysis of both practice quality and current risk; outstanding actions have a named owner and timescale, and managers check their completion and effect. Improvement activity is monitored so that changes to policies and records translate into safer care and better experiences for children.

Learning from Significant Events

TFF aims to be a reflective and learning organisation. Significant incidents, allegations, complaints, placement disruptions, safeguarding concerns and other important events are reviewed to identify learning. Review considers not simply what happened, but:

why it happened; whether risks were understood; whether plans were effective; whether information was shared appropriately; whether actions were timely; what could have been done differently; what needs to change.

Learning may result in:

changes to individual care arrangements; updated risk assessments; updated safer caring plans; additional support; additional training; reflective supervision; changes to policies or procedures; wider staff or foster carer learning; management action; service development.

Learning should be shared appropriately so improvements are not limited to the individual case from which they arose.

19 Review and contact details

Review of this Statement

This Statement of Purpose is kept under review and revised where appropriate. Review will take account of changes to:

ownership; organisational structure; leadership or management; services provided; legislation; regulations; statutory guidance; regulatory expectations; the needs of children and foster families; learning arising from quality assurance.

The statement and Children's Guide are reviewed at least annually and sooner when significant changes arise. TFF operates consistently with its Statement of Purpose and notifies Ofsted of revisions within the applicable regulatory timescale.

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