

**Haringey Children and Young People's Service**

# **Fostering Service**

## **Statement of Purpose**

*Reviewed September 2017*



**River Park House  
225 High Road  
London N22 8HQ**

## 1. Introduction

- Haringey Fostering Service Statement of Purpose has been written in consultation with staff and managers in the service. It has been endorsed by the Children and Young People's Service Management Group and formally approved by the Lead Member for Children and Young People on behalf of elected members.
- The Statement of Purpose will be made available to all staff working with children, young people and their families in Haringey's Children and Young People's Service Fostering Service. A copy will be given to Haringey Foster Carers Association and be made available to approved and prospective foster carers, children in foster placements as well as their parents or guardians. The Statement of Purpose is available on Haringey's Children's Social Care Manual.
- Haringey Fostering Service Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and any revision will be submitted to Ofsted within 28 days of the changes being endorsed by the management group.

## 2. Service Principles

Haringey Fostering Service works within the value framework that underpins the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards, Guidance and Regulations to promote high quality care in a family setting, which provides nurture, encouragement, safety and security to Looked After Children and Young People.

The principles that underpin our work are:

- The right of every child and young person to grow up in a secure and loving family who are best able to meet their needs throughout their childhood.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the fostering process.
- The need to ensure continuity in the lives of children and young people so that their identity and education can be maintained and developed, their physical and emotional health and wellbeing promoted and their full potential achieved.
- Respecting and recognising the importance of the ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language of children, young people, their families and foster carers to help the development of positive identities and high self-esteem.

- Ensuring early stability for children or young people either by returning to their birth families or within the wider family and friends network, with permanent parents through adoption or with quality long term foster carers or successfully supported through independent living arrangements.
- Promoting equality and diversity in the services delivered to children, young people and their families and therefore recognising the need to recruit carers who will be able to meet the diverse needs of the children and young people.
- The importance of working in partnership that embraces the involvement of children and young people, their parents, carers and significant others and all professionals involved in their care and development.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and taken into account in all aspects of their care. When it is not possible to act on their wishes, they will be helped to understand the reason. Every effort will be made to ensure the child or young person knows how to obtain support and, if necessary make a complaint.
- The provision of high quality foster care, by ensuring consistency in training and support to foster carers and including them as important stakeholders in the wider planning for children and young people.
- To provide quality and consistency in the provision of training, support and information to foster carers to enable them to meet the individual needs of the child and to develop their own skills as carers.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

Haringey's Fostering Service is committed to providing high quality care to Looked After Children and Young People and in doing so raise the profile of fostering to ensure all Looked After Children and Young People have positive experiences whilst living away from their birth families. The Fostering Service will also work to provide support and training to all foster carers to ensure they are suitably skilled to deliver high quality care. To achieve this, the Fostering Service will:

- Improve the life chances for Looked After Children, by increasing the number and quality of local placements in or close to the borough. This will enable children and young people to remain within their own community close to family and friends, to retain the stability offered by school and the continuity of other services.

- Ensure that the service exceeds the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations, National Minimum Standards and best practice.
- Engage and empower all children and young people to have a more effective voice in making decisions about their own care and planning service developments.
- Ensure that children unable to return to their birth family have agreed permanency plans which give them appropriate legal security and are progressed on a timescale that is right for the child. By developing the use of Special Guardianship and rationalising the delivery of Long Term Fostering.
- Support IROs to review Care Plans at every Looked After Child Review and make certain the plan for permanence is addressed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> review with clear timescales for implementation of the permanence plan.
- Make sure that every child and young person is provided with information about the services to be provided and the independent support systems, through the Haringey's Children's Guide.
- Provide foster carers with supervision & support and learning & development opportunities which will enable them to promote positive outcomes in all areas of children and young people's lives
- Employ skilled and competent social workers and ensure they make use of the council policies, procedures and systems effectively and equitably to increase the efficiency of the service so improving performance against agreed outcomes for children.
- Promote Haringey's priorities for children and young people – as detailed in the Children and Young People's Plan with a particular emphasis on promoting outcomes for children in care.

## **4. Management and Organisational Structure**

The Fostering Service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, training and support of all internally approved foster carers providing care to any Looked After Child or Young Person, including those who are 'Connected Persons'.

The Fostering Service consists of two supervision and support teams. The teams support all carers including 'connected persons'. The Head of Service for Children in Care and Placements has overall management responsibility for the service, and the Service Manager has day to day management responsibility. The day to day functions

[www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)

are managed and supervised by Team Managers who have responsibility for 1 Senior Practitioners and a total of 11 Supervising Social Workers.

## **5. Services Provided**

### **Babies and Younger Children**

- The primary task of the support team is to develop the skills and knowledge of foster carers, supporting them to carry out the functions associated with their registered role as carers. We develop foster carers who have skills in caring for babies and younger children who are being rehabilitated to parents, often through the court process, and to prepare babies and young children for adoption. The team actively promotes permanency planning for all children in care and works closely with the Adoption and Permanency Team.
- The foster carers' training programme includes courses on preparing children for permanent placements outside their immediate birth family. The programme aims to give carers the skills necessary to be able to move babies and young children on and to help them deal with the issues it provokes for them and their family.
- There is a focus on recruiting and training carers who can look after babies with significant health needs, often related to alcohol and drug misuse, and who work closely with health professionals. Carers are enabled to develop skills in supervising and facilitating contact with parents and other family members, participating in life story work and supporting preparations for moving on, be it back home or to adoptive parents.
- Carers are trained to provide stimulation through play to pre-school children and to facilitate access to early years provision and education. They are responsible for developing close relationships with class teachers and designated teachers for "children in care" to ensure that they integrate and develop positive relationships with their peers, to achieve to the best of their ability in Key Stages 1 and 2 and work towards the objectives in their PEPs.

### **Teenagers**

- The team develop and maintain a group of carers who are able to focus on improving the life chances of teenagers, to enable them to be successfully rehabilitated within their own families or to acquire life skills which will enable them to move on in a planned way to independence. We create positive

working links with the Young People in Care Team and the Young Adults Team, the Youth Offending Service, the Virtual School, and Health colleagues.

- There are active working arrangements with the Short Breaks Service to support the local care of children in need. Foster carers are helped to support young people with their education – Key Stages 3 and 4, GCSE and A Level – and to promote all aspects of their mental and physical health.
- Aspire, Children in Care Council enables young people in Haringey foster placements to give their views about the service. This group also engages in a range of social, cultural and recreational activities.

### **Kinship Care (Connected Person) Permanency**

- All carers, including 'Connected Person' are invited to general foster care training and support groups. In addition, special packages for supporting carers have been developed to address the specific issues involved in caring for the children of relatives and friends.
- The team works closely with Haringey's legal team and social work teams to develop sound plans for children in long term fostering arrangements.

## **6. Recruitment**

- The service has a recruitment strategy that is targeted to respond to the identified needs of Haringey's "children in care" population.
- Haringey's recruitment strategy is designed to attract local carers who are best able to meet the diverse needs of the looked after children and young people.

The needs of the service are continuously monitored and our strategy is updated according to the following statistical information:

- Monitoring of the outcomes of advertising and publicity campaigns
- Monitoring of the pattern of placement need against the supply of local foster carers.

## Assessment and Approval

- An initial visit will be arranged with applicants; this visit usually takes place within two weeks of contacting the service. The visiting social worker will discuss the fostering task, training requirements and the assessment process. The social worker will also gather information about the applicant's suitability for the fostering task. And complete documents required to undertake the checks required.
- The assessment stage commences upon completion of an application form.
- Applicants wishing to pursue their application must attend an Assessment Group. The aims of the group are to:
  - Ensure that applicants are able to come to their own decision, based upon the fullest information available, about whether or not fostering is right for them.
  - Build up a clear picture of the kind of fostering resource they are offering at this point
  - Produce a clear social work recommendation as to whether or not an applicant should go forward for full assessment and for what type of fostering and age-group of child/young person

Course material for the group programme is based upon "Skills to Foster" (Fostering Network), adapted to address the Haringey perspective. The following areas are covered in the groups:

- The feelings and behaviour of children experiencing loss and separation
- Working with children, including children who have been abused
- Working with parents, families and family networks, including parents who have abused or who are suspected of abusing their children
- Race, culture and identity
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Helping children to move on
- Working with the Department

## 7. Foster Carers Support

- Approved carers are supported and supervised by a named supervising social worker who will visit regularly. The supervising social worker conducts a formal supervision visit every six weeks and completes a report. In the case of longer-term carers and those who are 'Connected Persons', packages of support will be designed individually to meet the needs of the placement. Each carer will have at least one unannounced visit per year and regular contact is maintained with foster carers at a frequency that recognises the need for additional support on occasion.
- The Fostering Service operates an out of hours fostering advice and support service between 6pm and 11pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 11pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. Haringey Council's Emergency Duty Team operates from 1800 to 0800, Monday to Friday and throughout weekends and Bank Holidays.
- The service organises monthly support groups: day time and evening groups and a men's group. Foster carers are encouraged and supported to attend support groups.
- All approved foster carers gain automatic membership to Haringey Foster Carers' Association which is supported with an annual grant. The association is active in promoting the needs of children in care and work closely with the Fostering Service by taking a consultative role in developing service policy and procedures. Foster carers also have individual membership to Fostering Network.
- Haringey Fostering Service has a Learning and Development brochure offering a comprehensive training programme for foster carers. All carers have learning and development profiles and are encouraged to engage in courses and a range of learning and development opportunities, which will help their development and enhance their work with the children and young people.

## 8. Fostering Panel

- Haringey's Fostering Panel consists of people with a wide range of skills qualifications and experience. Members of the panel are drawn from a central list which include representatives from education and health, and is maintained by the Service Manager. The panel has an independent panel chair to ensure compliance with the fostering regulations and the Service Manager acts as coordinator for the panel.

- The panel meets on a monthly basis, with additional panels being held as and when necessary. It considers and makes recommendations concerning the initial approval of carers, foster carers annual reviews – particularly the first year review, changes to approval status, terminations of approval and in instances where there have been allegations or serious concerns about practice.
- The recommendations of the panel are passed to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Head of Service.

## **Annual Reviews of Foster Carers**

- The Fostering Placement Regulations requires foster carers to be reviewed annually in order to consider their suitability to continue to foster. Additional reviews can also be carried out if there is a change of circumstances or as directed by the Fostering Panel or the Head of Service.
- An independent staff member conducts the annual reviews for foster carers.

## **Termination of Approval**

- If a foster carer makes the decision to stop fostering for Haringey, they are encouraged to submit their decision in writing and their approval will be terminated 28 days from the date of the written decision. Their approval will be formally noted by the Fostering Panel and their name removed from Haringey's Foster Carers register.
- If Haringey Fostering Service considers that a person is no longer suitable to act as a foster carer it will refer the matter for consideration to the Fostering Panel. The Panel will hear information made available by the Fostering Service and the foster carer and make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.
- Haringey's policies and procedures detail the process to be followed allowing the foster carer to make full representation to the panel or the national Independent Review Mechanism, if the foster carer is not in agreement with the decision to terminate their approval.

## **9. Children's Guide to Fostering**

- The service has produced a Children's Guide for children who are looked after. The guide explains what foster care is and provides information about the fostering service and the responsibilities it has. Information about how to complain and useful phone numbers i.e. child line and children's Rights service as well as useful websites.
- A copy of the guide is given to all foster carers. And additional copies can be obtained from: the fostering service at the address above it is also available online

## **10. Quality Monitoring**

The quality of the work of the Fostering Service is monitored at all levels:

- At the end of a training event, evaluation forms/comments from carers
- Child care reviews, foster carer reviews and staff supervision system.
- The fostering panel which has a quality control function
- Case file audits and the complaints procedure

## **11. Complaints and Compliments**

- Haringey Fostering Service is committed to provide a high quality service and to learn from comments and complaints. We therefore welcome and encourage feedback from service users, providers and partner agencies. We recognise that children, their birth parents and foster carers are best placed to identify the strengths and deficiencies of the fostering service and, therefore able to inform the changes and developments needed to ensure continuing improvement.
- All approved foster carers are provided with written information about Haringey's Complaints Procedures, including contact details for the Complaints Officer. All children and young people who are of an appropriate age and understanding are likewise informed of the Complaints Procedures and the role of the Children's Rights Service.

The Fostering Service is always keen to receive feedback of a positive or negative nature, and can be contacted by letter, telephone or e-mail as follows:

- Fostering Service  
1st Floor River Park House  
225 High Road  
London  
N22 8HQ

Alternatively, or where complaints cannot be resolved directly with the Fostering Team, the Children and Young People's Service Complaints Team can be contacted by post, phone, email or text phone at:

- Feedback and Information Governance Team  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
River Park House  
225 High Road  
Wood Green  
London N22 8HQ  
Tel: 020 8489 2550

A leaflet entitled 'I want to be heard' provides information about the complaints procedure and can be picked up from any Council building which provides public access.

Complainants unhappy with the outcome of the Council's investigation can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at:

- Local Government Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
London SW1P 4QP  
Tel: 020 7217 4620  
Fax: 020 7217 4621  
Web: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)  
Advice Line: 0845 602 1983

The complaints service will always ensure that the complaint is dealt with in a fair and just manner and according to guidance. A leaflet advising on the procedure for investigating a complaint is made available by the Fostering Service.

### 13. The Registration Authority

Ofsted is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting Fostering agencies under the provision of the Care Standards Act 2000. If there is a need to contact Ofsted regarding an issue with the Fostering Service contact details are:

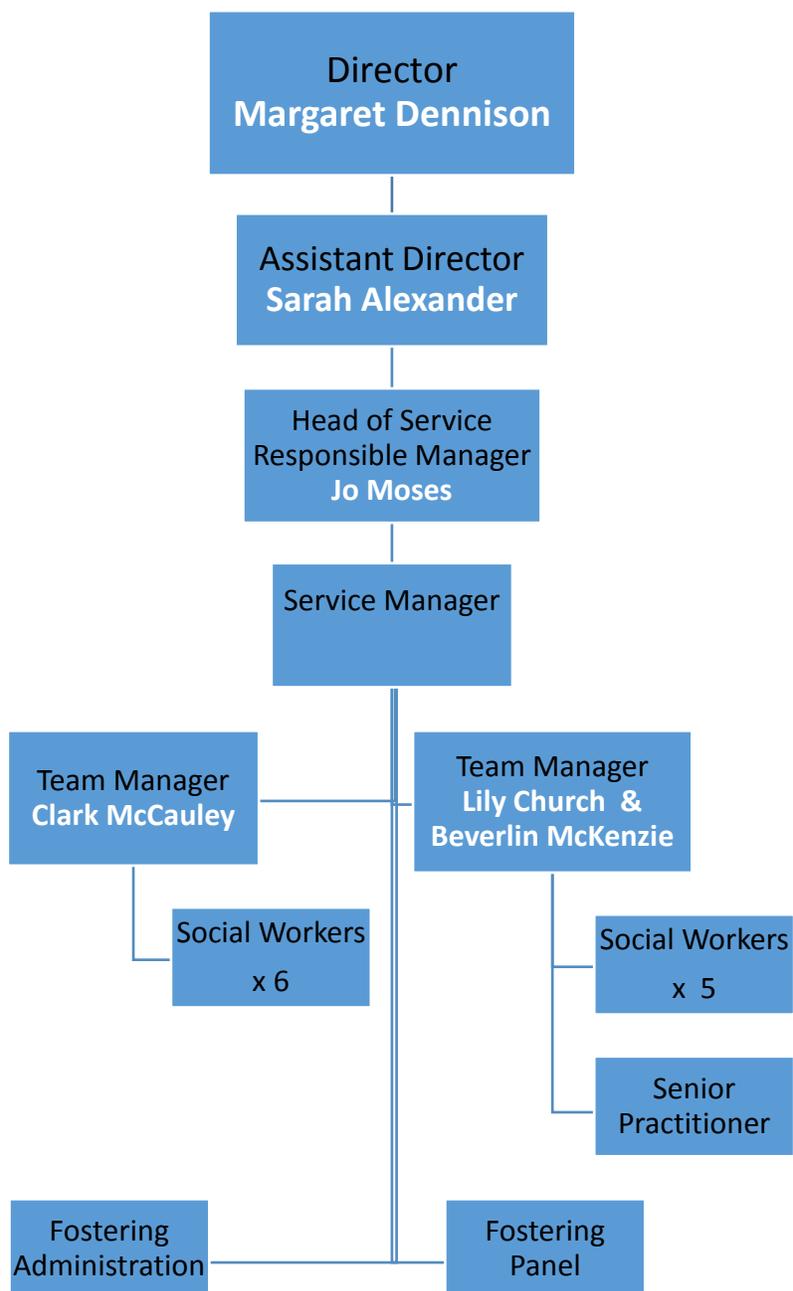
- Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### 14. Useful Contacts

- British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)  
Saffron House  
6-10 Kirby Street  
Farringdon  
London EC1N 8TS  
Email: [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7421 2600
  
- Fostering Network  
87 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8HA  
Email: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net)  
Tel: 020 7620 6400

## 6. Management and Operational Structure

### Appendix 1





## **Qualifications and experience of staff in the Fostering Service**

<b>Name &amp; Position</b>	<b>Qualifications &amp; Experiences</b>
Head of Service	DipSW or equivalent and three years' post experience
Service Manager	
Team Managers	All hold DipSW or equivalent and three years' post experience