

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LEARNING AND LEISURE
CABINET MEMBER**

REVISION TO THE FOSTERING SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1 OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the approval for the annual revisions to the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Fostering Service is required by The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards (Fostering) 2011 - to have in place a Statement of Purpose that is reviewed on a regular basis and updated as appropriate.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Following the yearly review of the Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service, revisions have been made which ensure they reflect current practice revised guidance and updated legislation.
- 3.2 The revisions are
- Information relating to the management restructuring of Fostering Services.
 - A revision of allowances paid to foster carers following an annual increase of the National Minimum Rate.
 - The number of North Lincolnshire approved foster families.
 - The number of children in care in foster placements.
 - The revised Service Structure Chart detailing the current members of the service.
 - Updated details of staffing qualifications and experience to reflect the current staff members of the service.
 - Current training courses provided to foster carers
- 3.3 A Young Person's Statement of Purpose 2018-2019 has been produced in consultation with children in care and foster carers. This will be revised and updated annually.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Fostering Services (England) Regulations require that the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes in staffing, practice or procedures. It is a statutory requirement that the Statement of purpose is approved by the lead member for Children on an annual basis.
- 4.2 To meet these requirements, the Statement of Purpose may be accepted without changes, or amendments as deemed appropriate by the cabinet member will be included in the Statement of Purpose.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Statutory - The Statement of Purpose is a requirement under The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations 2011.

6 OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 6.1 An integrated impact assessment has been completed and there are no unresolved issues.

7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED

- 7.1 Children and foster carers are regularly consulted in the delivery of the service. Their views are reflected in the Statement of Purpose.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the revised Fostering Service Statement of Purpose.

DIRECTOR: CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

The North Lincolnshire Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2017



North Lincolnshire Council

Statement of Purpose for Fostering 2018 - 2019



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This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please phone **01724 297024** if you need any of these or any other help to access North Lincolnshire's services.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Statement of Purpose is produced in compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (NMS) 2011 and Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. All information is correct as at 31st March 2018. This document will be revised annually. Significant in year changes will be put in writing to the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The Young Person's Statement of Purpose has been produced in partnership with foster carers and children in care.

The Fostering Services Team delivers a fostering service on behalf of North Lincolnshire Council. All involved in the planning and delivering of care, work together as a team around the child (TAC) where all views, wishes and feelings are taken into account including those of the child or young person and their parent(s) and carer(s).

The Fostering Service is registered with;

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231

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North Lincolnshire Council believes that family care is the best provision of alternative care for most children or young people who become looked after by the Local Authority. It has therefore invested heavily in the development and expansion of its fostering provision.

Furthermore we are of the view that a high quality of care is best achieved by providing a foster care service that protects children, promotes their rights and maximizes their life chances. This is an exciting period of change for the fostering service and the plans for change are reflected both in our statement of purpose and development action plan.

North Lincolnshire Council has agreed with its partners a vision for all children and young people living in North Lincolnshire and this vision is expressed through the North Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Partnership, Single plan 2016-20.

We hold a long-standing and deeply held ambition for all children and young people within North Lincolnshire. Being the champion for the vulnerable child is our over-riding purpose. We ensure that every vulnerable child has equitable opportunities to be the best they can be: irrespective of their individual backgrounds or circumstances. We use our values, influence and authority to engender greater aspiration for children across our partner agencies - so that all children achieve outstanding outcomes.

We are striving to ensure that at every stage of each child's journey they:

- **Feel safe and be safe**
- **Enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing**
- **Recognise and achieve their potential**

There is much to celebrate in our progress towards realising our vision. The voices of children and young people routinely inform the way in which we design and deliver services. Children, young people and families tell us how well their plans are helping them to make improvements in their lives. Performance data indicates many improved outcomes across the population. Moreover, practice reflection is deepening our understanding of how to make the greatest, lasting difference within the resources available.

As always, we strive for even better outcomes and the purpose of this plan is to set out the priorities for services for children in the period ahead. It is important that every member of staff working for children and families understands these priorities. The plan recognises that it is people that make change happen. That is why the three drivers are:

- **Empowering children**
- **Building family and community capacity**
- **Developing the workforce**

Services will continue to transform so that children, young people and families receive the right service, in the right time and at the right place. Professional behaviours will underpin honest, outcomes driven engagement, facilitation and working together. Even better outcomes will be achieved, moving us closer towards equity and excellence for all our children and young people

In line with this vision, a number of improvements have been achieved and includes:

- Children who have been in care for more than 1 year and are aged 10 years plus subject to final warnings and convictions remains consistently low.

This has been achieved through partnership working between Youth Offending Services (YOS), Children's Social Work Services, The Fostering Services Team, Kingfisher Lodge, The Family are Safe, Supported and Transformed Team (FaSST); where a focus on preventative work has been in place. Positive identification of those at risk of offending is in place and early action to divert children and young people into positive activities has had a positive outcome. This initiative has been supported by all agencies and the corporate parenting group demonstrating the positive impact of multi-agency working on an individual level and a community level.

- At the end of March 2018, 100% of children under the age of 5 years had received a health assessment and teeth check.
- There is now a Single Access Point (SAP) in place for professionals and the public to access locality preventative/targeted services to children and families to prevent family breakdown and entry to care and safeguarding services.
- There is a safer recruitment strategy in place which ensures that all employees are DBS checked and these are renewed every 2 years and all staff are required to undertake child protection training.
- Every child who has been missing from care is offered an interview with the Independent Advocate upon their return.
- Every child in care has access to an Independent Advocate and they know the name of the advocate.
- Every child placed out of North Lincolnshire is visited by the Independent Advocate on a regular basis.
- Any child that has experienced a placement move is seen by the Independent Advocate and any comments made are fed back to the Child's Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker with actions required.

The key priorities set out in The Children's Services Plan and Young People's Plan are:

- Increase placement choice
- Secure improved permanence through adoption and guardianship
- Embed the early help offer
- Development of integrated working (including The Families Initiative)
- Celebrate and engage young people
- Manage change and develop staff to respond to the changing needs of the care population
- Meet the new requirement to manage remands and custody
- Continuous service evaluation and inspection readiness
- Ensure children are safe
- Improve the education and employment of children in care

The Aspirations and Actions for 2018 as detailed in the Children in Care and Care Leavers Partnership Strategy are embedded in our aims and objectives.



2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ADOPTION & FOSTERING SERVICE

The services aims and objectives are underpinned by the CYPP priorities as outlined in Section 1, and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) 2011 core values which underpin the Fostering Service as follows:

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.
- Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up in a loving environment that can meet their developmental needs.
- Every child should have his or her wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account.
- Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- The significance of contact for looked after children, and of maintaining relationships with birth parents and the wider family, including siblings, half-siblings and grandparents, is recognised, as is the foster carer's role in this.
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own children and to have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.
- The central importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child.

- Foster carers have a right to full information about the child.
- It is essential that foster carers receive relevant support services and development opportunities in order to provide the best care for children.
- Genuine partnership between all those involved in fostering children is essential for the NMS to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, fostering service providers and foster carers.



North Lincolnshire Council is committed to providing foster care as one of a full range of accommodation options for children who need to be cared for away from home. Recruitment of foster carers will be in line with the Council's strategy to meet the sufficiency duty under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Sufficiency Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children 2010.

The overall intention of foster care is to provide a family based alternative home to care for children and young people who are not able to live at home with their parents, are not able to live with their relatives or friends (who are not approved as foster carers), are not able to live independently in their own accommodation cannot be secured permanence through adoption, Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangements Order.

In general foster care should provide care, which meets the needs of children in care, for planned periods of time. In some cases, young people may stay in foster care until they move into independent accommodation.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, secure and enabling environment for children in care for varying lengths of time, including short breaks, dependent upon their assessed needs. To this end foster carers will be appropriately assessed, trained and supervised in order to provide high quality care

that values diversity and individual identity as well as promoting healthy development and emotional security.

- Promote and safeguard the child or young person's physical and emotional welfare and therefore all applicants / foster carers will be required to provide satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS's). Applications will not be considered from anyone or their household members who have committed offences specified under regulation 26(7)(b) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011. All applicants must also have satisfactory medical reports and will not be considered to foster children less than five years of age if they smoke. Furthermore allegations of abuse or neglect against a foster carer will be investigated according to the procedures developed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Promote contact between the looked after child or young person and their birth family and friends, in line with the child's care plan. The fostering service acknowledges the importance of family and friends of a looked after child or young person and foster carers are expected to encourage and facilitate contact.
- Ensure that children who are admitted to our care are returned to their own family and community networks at the earliest opportunity, whenever it is safe to do so. Where reunification to the child or young person's family is not in the child's best interests, we will endeavour to work with everyone concerned to help the child or young person move on to become part of a stable and permanent, alternative family which is maintained into adulthood.
- Provide each child in foster care with the opportunity, through health care, education and social and leisure activities, to have high aspirations for themselves, to develop to their full potential and achieve the five outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying life and achieving their aspirations, enjoying economic wellbeing and making a positive contribution to society.
- Encourage children and young people in foster care to access community resources and facilities. Foster carers will be financially supported to encourage looked after children to partake in community and out of school hours leisure activities.
- Ensure that all children and young people in foster care have written combined care plans which detail how the child or young person's needs are to be met. These plans are reviewed on a regular basis.
- Ensure that all children who wish to remain with their former foster carers upon reaching 18 years of age are supported to do so, in a "Staying Put" arrangement, if this is agreed by both the young person and the foster carer.

North Lincolnshire Council believes that children are best placed within their own family and community networks whenever it is safe and possible to do so. Friends, relatives or significant people

that have been approved as specific carers for children and young people will have access to the same support systems as non-relative foster carers.

North Lincolnshire Council celebrates diversity and will not act in a discriminatory manner in relation to issues of age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or religion. The needs of individual children are considered as paramount and each case will be considered on the basis of how individual children's needs can be most appropriately met.



The Foster Carers' Charter:

North Lincolnshire Council acknowledges the excellent care, support and commitment shown by North Lincolnshire Foster Carers. The Foster Carer's Charter demonstrates and recognises the joint responsibilities to the children and young people in care, and builds on the success and achievements of fostering in North Lincolnshire.

The Government launched the Foster Carers' Charter in March 2011. It was jointly produced with fostering organisations, charities and children in care. Recognising the invaluable work of foster carers, it sets out clear principles. These are based on the core belief that children come first, how foster carers should be treated, and the pivotal role played by carers in helping children achieve to their full potential.

North Lincolnshire has embraced the principles of the Charter and through consultation and involvement of children, young people and foster carers, developed the '**North Lincolnshire Foster Carers' Charter**' which is regularly reviewed.

This Charter builds on the existing solid foundations and ongoing commitment by North Lincolnshire Council to its Foster Carers. This is through:

- Ensuring foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care.
- Ensuring foster carers receive day-to-day support, events and activities for foster families.

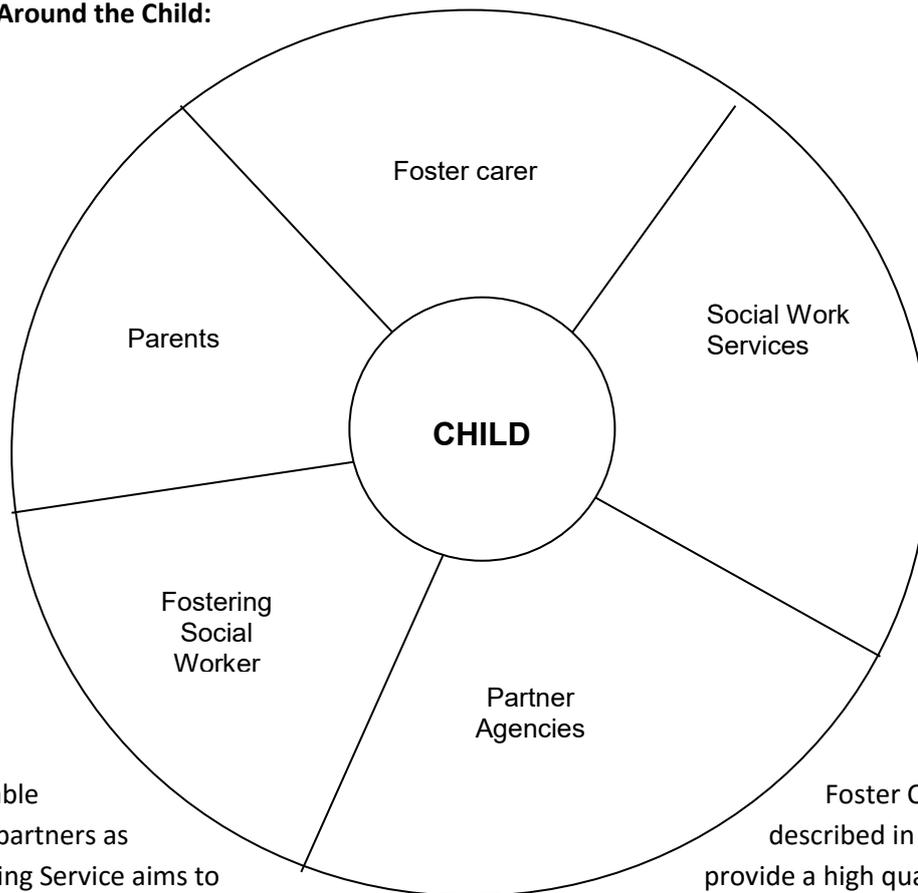
- Listening to both carers and children. Children's and young people's views will be sought on all decisions concerning their daily lives and the future. Children and young people are actively encouraged to attend planning meetings and reviews. Where decisions are made which are not taken in line with the child's or young person's wishes a clear explanation will be given.
- Treating foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child, and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of the foster child.
- Supporting children to develop their own identities and aspirations.
- Further development and expansion of foster care in North Lincolnshire.

The charter is reviewed on a regular basis in partnership with Carers, children in care and social workers for the children and carers. The newly revised charter is reviewed and re launched on a regular basis the last being September 2017.

3. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Foster carers are recognised as core members of the team around the child (TAC) with an important contribution to make in the planning and decision making about the child or young person in their care. The TAC will also include the child's parents, child care social workers and fostering social workers alongside all other relevant partnership agencies, for example colleagues who work within education, health or other specialist services, as shown in the next diagram.

Team Around the Child:



To enable equal partners as Fostering Service aims to child centred service in relation to its 4 core functions. These are:

Foster Carers to work as described in the diagram, the provide a high quality responsive

- To recruit new Foster Carer applicants from within the local community. The aims are to increase the number of foster carers in our locality to ensure that children and young people requiring foster care remain as near to their families as possible and to offer a wider foster placement choice for all children requiring alternative care provision including teenagers and children with complex care needs.
- To prepare applicants, through training, discussion, meeting existing foster carers and children in care to be able to effectively understand and manage the fostering task in a manner that is strengths based.
- To assess each applicant comprehensively, in line with the competency framework, to ensure that they are suitable and able to carry out the role.
- To supervise Foster Carers on a regular basis through a minimum of monthly visits and regular telephone calls to ensure that they are supported and fully informed. To support every foster carer to be trained to the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD's), to enable them to competently, confidently and safely fulfil their role.



4. TYPES OF FOSTERING PROVISION OFFERED BY NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

In order to maximise the fostering services flexibility in responding to the individual needs of children requiring alternative care, there are a number of different types of foster placement available in North Lincolnshire. Foster carers can be approved for one or more of the following types of foster care placements:

- **Mainstream Fostering**

Provides care for children and young people - from one overnight stay up to the age of 18 years, depending upon a child's individual circumstances and the legal situation. Applicants wanting to consider fostering need to be able to move children on: either back to their birth families, or on to other forms of permanency such as adoption, Special Guardianship, Child Arrangements Order where this is in line with their permanency plan.

Children and young people who cannot return home or to birth family members but for who adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order is not appropriate, their permanency plan will be one of permanent fostering and they will remain with their foster carers until they reach the age of 18 or beyond in a staying put arrangement.

- **Mainstream Short Breaks Fostering**

A short break for mainstream children involves caring for a child for a weekend on a regular or impromptu basis in order to offer children the opportunity to enhance their life experiences and support parents or carers to care for the child or young person on a permanent basis. Short breaks can also involve caring for a child whilst other foster carers are away on holiday.

- **Butterflies Short Break Scheme**

This scheme provides care and support for children and young people with disabilities. This can include day-care or a limited number of overnight stays per month, consistently caring for the same child. Children are specifically matched to carers based upon the child's individual needs. This scheme has been developed through recent investment by the council to provide for children with disabilities and their families requiring additional support.

- **Connected Person Foster Care**

Increasingly, and whenever possible, children who require alternative care are placed with friends or extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, close neighbours and so on. These placements often work well for children, as they go to live with people they

already know. Friends and family foster carers are only assessed and approved when children are subject to interim or full care orders.

- **Parent and Child Care**

Parent and child placements are provided under the specialist foster carer scheme and receive an allowance for the child, a fee in recognition of the specialist nature of this arrangement. A fostering allowance is also received in respect of caring for a young parent under the age of 18 and an additional allowance if supporting a young parent over the age of 18. There are no other children in placement for the duration of a parent and child arrangement.

- **Emergency/Alternative to Remand Care**

Some children need a placement in an emergency for a variety of reasons, including conflict within the family home, homelessness, missing from home or as a result of alleged criminal activity. Individual foster carers are approved specifically to fulfil this role and have the skills and resilience to meet the needs of children in an emergency situation.

- **Staying Put**

North Lincolnshire Council is committed to preventing social exclusion amongst care leavers and has developed a “Staying Put” policy in order to ensure that they can continue to live with former foster carers after their 18th birthday and make the transition to independent living at a pace that suits their needs.



Children joining a foster family

Children and young people will be come into Foster Care following an assessment that has deemed that they are:

- Unable to live with their own family.
- Unable to live with family or friends who are not Foster Carers.

Except in emergency or urgent situations, referrals for Fostering services will be made by the Child’s Social Worker via the Children’s Social Work Service Manager, for consideration at the weekly Legal, Tracking and Decision Making Meeting.

Following the recommendations of that meeting the Adoption & Fostering Service will carry out a matching process to match the child's needs with the most appropriate Foster Carer taking into account the child's previous experiences and any risks posed identified in the Risk Analysis Form. This will be recorded on an Initial Placement Matching and Risk Assessment form. The Foster Carer will be contacted and given full information to allow them to make a decision about whether to accept the placement.

Emergency admissions are accepted, following the agreement of three Service Managers or Responsible Officer, they must agree that entry into care is in the best interests of the child. Procedures require the gathering of a basic minimum of information before settling the child into the home. An emergency-planning meeting is held the next day in order to complete the normal CiC care planning process. All emergency admissions to foster care are considered at the next Legal, Tracking and Decision Making Meeting for ratification.

5. CAPACITY

Number of foster carers

There are 126 approved foster carers as at the end of March 2018. Of these 100 are mainstream foster carers, 16 are connected persons carers and 10 are carers offering short breaks.

Number of children looked after in foster placements

As of 31st March 2018 North Lincolnshire Council cared for 183 children in foster care placements, equating to 81% of all children in care.

It is anticipated that on average a full time Fostering Social Worker will support up to 20 foster carers or undertake approximately 4 assessments at any one time. They will also have input into the recruitment, selection and training of foster carers.



6. RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND ASSESSMENT OF FOSTER CARERS

An ongoing recruitment strategy and programme of events is in place to work with our partners in the community to raise the profile of the Fostering Service and to encourage members of the North Lincolnshire community to apply to become Foster Carers.

Activities that are identified within the strategy include:

- Planned recruitment drives within the local community over the year.
- Articles in the local 'Direct News'.
- Good news stories from existing Foster Carers published in the local press, to inform the public on the role of a foster carer and the rewards that it can offer.
- Attendance at community events.
- A sponsored roundabout in central Scunthorpe.
- Publicised road show events at venues within the local authority.
- Stalls at Lincolnshire Show and other local agricultural shows.
- Posters in the local community, e.g. doctor's surgeries, community centres, libraries, supermarkets and other strategic points within the community etc.
- Permanent advertising displays at Scunthorpe, Crowle and Brigg libraries.
- Representatives from the team and North Lincolnshire's cohort of foster carers have appeared on local TV and local radio stations.
- The deployment of banners at key points across North Lincolnshire.
- Revamped fostering specific pages on North Lincolnshire Council's website.
- Awareness raising on all North Lincolnshire Council's employee's computer desktops.
- Advertising on local businesses and organisations websites', newsletters and premises.
- North Lincolnshire Council is a foster carer friendly employer offering extended special leave and flexible working conditions for employees who are or who would like to be foster carers. The fostering service is encouraging other organisations and businesses to become foster carer friendly too.
- The fostering service has developed a fostering ambassador scheme where trained frontline staff can advise the public on how to become a foster carer. This is now being rolled out across other businesses and organisations in North Lincolnshire.

- Following the rebranding of recruitment materials which also incorporates the corporate parenting strapline developed by CiC, new illustrations are regularly developed by the service and the communications team to recruitment materials and generate new interest.
- Robust recruitment programme of activity over fostering fortnight held in May 2018.
- The increasing use of social media including facebook and twitter.
- The involvement in a region wide UASC project funded through the MCFund (Home Office) focussing on the recruitment and support foster carers inviting unaccompanied and asylum seeking refugee children to join their families.
- Monthly meetings are held between the fostering service and communications teams to review the recruitment campaign. A rolling calendar of events is identified and maintained which includes several recruitment events across the county and beyond.
- A new information booklet has been developed by the service in consultation with the fostering community. The aim is to generate interest in becoming a foster carer by creating a positive impression on applicants by being in keeping with the services branding and being written from the perspective of a foster carer, with a friendly and person focussed feel to the content.
- DVD's have been created and are displayed during recruitment events, screened in public access areas and are accessible on the fostering services website as well as via social media. The DVD's are refreshed and new ones developed to maintain interest.
- A rolling enquiries tracking form is maintained and updated on a frequent basis in order to track and progress the stages of recruitment from enquiry to approval. This is to assist in identifying new/varying trends in successful recruitment activities as well as reasons for not wishing to proceed in order to aid learning and to ensure regulation compliance.

Through effective management and analysis of data and performance; the Fostering Service is able to identify any shortfalls in the types of foster care required in order to meet the needs of the children that are assessed as needing foster care. The recruitment strategy is adjusted to take this into account. During this year recruitment activity will concentrate on recruiting foster carers who are able to provide mainstream foster care for teenagers and unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children (UASC), short breaks foster care for children with disabilities and foster care for children and young people with complex care needs as well as carers motivated to provide short term care for babies and children with alternative permanency plans including adoption, Special Guardianship, Child Arrangements or long-term care for older children.

The Fostering Service has developed timescales for responding to enquires about the service, these are;



- **Telephone**

A dedicated fostering support worker is available during normal office hours, Monday to Friday, to answer any enquiries. Enquiries will be answered during office hours on the day the enquiry is made and a brochure will be emailed or posted on the same day.

- **Online**

Enquirers can read the information about fostering online and complete an expression of interest form if they wish to have further information. There is a short film accessible for prospective Foster Carers to watch providing them with information from current North Lincolnshire Foster Carers.

Follow up contact will be made within 5 working days to arrange for an initial visit at a mutually convenient time. During this visit detailed discussions take place about the benefits and implications that being a Foster Carer can have.

If the enquirer continues to be interested, they are asked to complete consent forms to enable checks to be undertaken and are invited to attend the next Skills to Foster course.

All fostering assessments are completed within 6 months of application and follow the two stage assessment process set out in the Assessment and Approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, July 2013.

Preparation of New Foster Carers

After an initial visit, if applicants wish to proceed, they are allocated a place on a 'Skills to Foster Course'. This course helps to prepare and equip applicants to undertake the role of a foster carer. During this training course applicants have the opportunity to meet current foster carers and children in foster care, to discuss any issues with them.

Children in care also undertake a Young People's Home Assessment visit to prospective foster carers. This was initiated by the Children in Care Council, who considered that there are unique insights that care experienced children can bring to the home assessment of Foster carers.

A session of the course is also delivered to children of prospective carers to ensure they have as full an understanding of the role as possible and is included in all aspects of the preparation process. North Lincolnshire Council currently facilitates monthly Skills to Foster training courses, to ensure the initial assessment stage (stage one) is completed within an 8 week period.

Assessment of Foster Carers

The initial assessment stage (stage one) ensures that all statutory checks are undertaken and if no issues arise, enquirers are invited to complete an application form for a formal assessment. North Lincolnshire Council has adopted the “Secure Base” model assessment process. The assessment focuses on integrating children in care into family life, safeguarding children and promoting their welfare, explores different aspects of the applicants’ life and asks them to explain and evidence the parenting skills that they have. The completed report is shared with the applicants and they are invited to make comments. The assessment process is thorough and detailed; regulatory timescales allows 8 months from initial enquiry to approval as foster carers, all assessments undertaken by the Fostering Services Team are completed within 6 months unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Once the assessment has been completed the report is submitted to the Foster Panel. This independent panel comprises of people from a variety of backgrounds with various experiences of the fostering process, and is chaired by a social work consultant who is independent of North Lincolnshire Council. The Foster Panel considers and recommends the approval, or not, of all Foster Carers. Their recommendations and reasons are passed to the Principal Social Worker – Children and Adults who is the Senior Officer designated as the Agency Decision Maker and with whom the decision-making responsibility rests.

North Lincolnshire Fostering Service aims to complete stage two of the process within 16 weeks, ensuring that the full assessment is completed within 6 months.

All foster carers will receive information about expectations of them and the fostering service, remunerations and council policies and procedures and they will be expected to comply with these. All foster carers are subject to an annual review of their status as Foster Carers. This is a formal review of the work that they have undertaken during the year and is an opportunity to reflect on achievements and learning. Again a report is produced that is presented to the Foster Panel and Agency Decision Maker as above.

Feedback is gathered from a range of professionals involved in the child’s care, children who have been in placement over the previous year and their parents, if appropriate. The carer’s children are also asked for feedback in relation to their experience of being a family who foster.

Children who have moved placement are seen by an independent advocate, information from those meetings are fed into the foster carer review and any areas of concern are followed up immediately.

North Lincolnshire Council have recruited an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to chair Foster Carer Reviews, the position is based at the Independent Review Team. The IRO will see children and young people independently as part of the Foster Carer Review.

Foster Panel

North Lincolnshire Foster Panel takes place on the third and fourth Monday of each month. It consists of an independent chairperson, local authority elected members; a social worker with fostering experience, medical advisor, former looked after child, foster carer from a neighbouring local authority, CAMHS representative, and an education representative. Panel will be made up of any

number of panel members, ensuring quoracy is achieved. A central list of panel members is also maintained to ensure that additional expertise can be called upon when required and that panel is always quorate by calling on additional members when required. All panel members are recruited using safer recruitment policies.

All new assessments are presented to North Lincolnshire Foster Panel for consideration. The panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). The ADM is a senior manager with no line management responsibility for the fostering service, ensuring independence is maintained. The ADM reads all of the paperwork presented to panel, minutes of the meeting and reaches a decision.

Foster panel hears all new applications, connected persons applications, long term matches, first review of foster carers, requests to change the terms of approval of a foster carer, reviews following allegations or misconduct by foster carers. The panel also has a role in monitoring the quality of the service and receives updates on management information regarding placements, stability and sufficiency. Panel members monitor the quality of paperwork presented to panel and this is fed back to the fostering service.

An additional review panel is held on a monthly basis, which considers the annual reviews of foster carers.



7. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF FOSTER CARERS

Access to Support and Supervision

All foster carers will receive regular supervision and support as well as access to training to enhance the quality of care given. All foster carers will have access to a rolling programme of bespoke training as identified during supervision. North Lincolnshire Council believes that it is important that Foster Carers are able to access support at the time when they need it. Systems have been developed to ensure that support is available 24 hours a day 365 days of the year.

Fostering Social Worker - After approval each Foster Carer is allocated a Fostering Social Worker. This worker will usually be the first point of contact for the Foster Carer during working hours and will offer

support, advice, guidance and supervision regarding most matters to do with fostering and the care they give to the child. The Fostering Social Worker will be responsible for the foster carer's supervision, support and development. Contact is maintained through home visits and regular telephone calls, texts and emails. The Fostering Social Worker is required to undertake a supervisory home visit on a monthly basis minimum. Support is also offered to the children of foster carers.

Duty Fostering Social Worker - If a foster carer's Fostering Social Worker is not available during office hours, a duty worker is always available at the Adoption and Fostering Services Team office to deal with any urgent problems or issues.

Child's Social Worker - Every child in care has an allocated Social Worker. This person will usually be the first point of contact for the foster carer for any information and advice on issues that relate to the child.

Child's Duty Social Worker - If the child's social worker is not available during office hours, a duty worker is always available at the Children in Care Team office to deal with any urgent problems or issues.

Outside Office Hours - If additional support is required outside of these times, it can be accessed by contacting Kingfisher Lodge for general advice or the Extended Hours Team for urgent or serious matters.

Health and Specialist Clinical Psychology Advice - Support will be offered to foster carers to ensure that they meet the health needs of the child or young person in their care. This will be through guidance and training from the fostering team and by the specialist services of the nurse for looked after Children, including the Tiered Foster Care service offered by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Education Inclusion Service - Foster carers will be supported to meet the educational needs of children and young people in their care, by all partners including the Looked after Children in Education team, led by a virtual head teacher for looked after children.

Foster Carer's Association Group - Support can be accessed by attending the Foster Carer's Association Group or contacting a group member.

Fostering Service Bi-monthly Information Meetings - All foster carers are invited to attend these meetings or have their views represented by members of the Foster Carer's Association.

Fostering Network Membership - All foster carers are given annual membership of the Fostering Network. This is an independent organisation that offers carers support advice and guidance on fostering issues including when allegations or complaints are made about a foster carer.

Foster Helpline - This is provided by Fostering Network for all approved foster families to access telephone advice and support when required.

UASC Support Helpline - This is provided by the Refugee Council and is available to foster carers, unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children (UASC), Fostering Social Workers and Children's Social Workers. The Refugee Council will also undertake home visits to foster carers and UASC in their care, they offer psychologist support and hold a monthly drop in for UASC in North Lincolnshire.

Children and Young People's Guide - North Lincolnshire Council believes that children have a right to information and support throughout the fostering process. All children, allowing for age and understanding, are provided with either a copy of a 'Children's Guide to Living in a Foster Home' or 'Living in a Foster Home, a Young People's Guide' depending on their age. These guides give simple but clear information around what it is like to live in foster home.

Support Group for Children of Foster Carers - The "Wacky Club" has been set up to enable children of foster carers to meet on a social basis. This is facilitated by a member of the Fostering Services Team.

Tiered Fostering Meetings - These meetings are held with CAMHS, foster carers, education, child's social worker and the fostering social worker. This approach ensures that there is a team around the child well positioned to address that child's individual needs. Network meetings are held in relation to children with more complex needs ensuring positive working together towards that individual child's needs.

Fostering Support Workers - Foster Support Workers within the service will offer a high level of support to children in care, children of foster carers and their foster carers when placement stability may be under threat. The support has ranged from taking the child or young person out for a recreational activity, provide a short break without an overnight stay with alternative carers, provide 1:1 support to a child or young person enabling them to attend activities and groups that otherwise they would not have been able to attend, supporting children who foster and have used Restorative Justice Techniques with children and their foster families. All foster carers receive a visit from their Fostering Social Worker at least once a month as a formal supervision arrangement. They receive additional visits according to their needs and depending upon the needs of the children they are caring for. Regulation requires that an unannounced visit to a foster home should be undertaken at least annually. In North Lincolnshire such visits are undertaken at least on a quarterly basis thereby exceeding this national minimum requirement.

Counselling - In recognition of the challenges and impact on foster carers the service provides access to a counsellor.

Experienced foster carer 'buddy/mentor' - A buddy/mentor will support them in their new role. As foster carers establish themselves within the fostering community, they are able to utilise support from within the North Lincolnshire fostering community. Where specific issues arise they may be linked to another foster carer with experience of similar situations. Examples of this include utilising the support of a Muslim carer to assist White British carers caring for Muslim children and also providing day care with the Muslim carer to support the child maintaining connections within the Muslim community.

Foster Carer Friendly Employer - North Lincolnshire Council is a foster carer friendly employer and supports employees who are or are applying to be foster carers for the Council by offering extended leave and flexible work opportunities where applicable to enable foster carers to attend training, meetings and appointments in order to meet the child(ren) in care's needs.

Allowances - North Lincolnshire Council believes that Foster Carers should be reimbursed for the costs of looking after a child and provides a range of allowances and financial incentives to enable them to do this. Payments will be made to foster carers in a timely fashion and in accordance with government guidance. Following consultation with carers the council introduced a 2 level allowances scheme

Level one Allowance - The Council has assessed what it believes to be the weekly cost of caring for a child and all foster carers are paid the National Minimum Fostering Allowance to enable them to do this. The weekly national minimum fostering allowance 2018-19 is:

0 – 4:	£129.00
5-10:	£143.00
11-15:	£164.00
16+:	£191.00

Level two Allowance - Foster carers following completion of all required training and the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD's) portfolio, receive a fee in addition to the national minimum fostering allowance. The weekly payment is:

0-4:	£147.00
5 – 10	£167.00
11- 15:	£212.00
16+:	£254.00

These payments are made to foster carers as they are required to carry out duties associated with looking after children for the Local Authority such as attending Looked After Children's (LAC) Reviews, LAC Medicals, Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, receiving statutory home visits and completing the Training, Support & Development Standards workbook.

Extra payments are made to all foster carers for special events such as holidays, birthdays and Christmas, or other religious festivals.

Foster Carers who become Special Guardians (SGO's) are paid the basic weekly allowance excluding additional task enhanced payments and child benefit.

Additional Allowances - At times foster carers are asked to carry out tasks that are in addition to what are agreed as normal fostering tasks. When this occurs, additional fee can be paid. Foster carers can receive up to 5 additional fees at a time. These are reviewed on a three monthly basis.

Interest Free Car Loans - To enable foster carers to transport children safely, interest free care loans are available so that foster carers can purchase safe and appropriate vehicles. This does not include connected persons carers or SGO's.

Insurance Scheme - At times all children can have accidents that cause damage. When such damage occurs carers are initially asked to claim on their own household insurance. Any excess payments or increase in premiums that results from this can be reclaimed through North Lincolnshire Council's scheme. In the event of the carers insurance not covering the loss or damage, a claim can be submitted for consideration by the Fostering Service insurance agents.

In order to encourage young people to participate in sporting and recreational activities an additional payment may, in certain circumstances, be made to foster carers to enable the child or young person to participate in hobbies and activities such as horse riding, dancing or other sporting activities etc.

Support Events - The Adoption & Fostering Service recognises the importance of facilitating support events to allow foster carers, children and young people to socialise and relax in an informal setting. Various events are held throughout the year, including:

- **Day out to a theme park** - This traditionally takes place in May or June and allows foster families the opportunity to meet together and experience a day out at a theme park. In recent years Flamingo Land has proved to be the favourite, as it caters for all age groups.
- **Foster Carers Achievement Event** - This is an event to recognise the hard work and commitment of our foster carers, celebrating their achievements including years of service and training.
- **Fun day** - This event takes place mid-September and involves a wide range of activities and fun events. This may include a BBQ, disco/karaoke, various inflatables, magic show, clowns, circus skills and craft activities. Each year we have a theme and fancy dress is encouraged for all.
- **Children's Christmas Party** - This is held in December at the school of the Virtual Head Teacher. The children are entertained by very experienced high quality entertainers who engage children across the whole age range and also encourage foster carer participation. Father Christmas visits the party to deliver Christmas selection boxes to the children and young people.
- **Pantomime** - This annual event takes place at the local theatre on the morning of Christmas Eve and an additional date in the first week of January. This event is integral to our Christmas celebrations.
- **Annual Art and Literary Exhibition** - Young people in care are invited to produce art using different medias to be exhibited at a local venue. This can include drama, poetry, dance and paintings.
- **Art Workshops** - Due to the success of the art exhibition, we now organise regular Art Workshops where the children produce works of art, cards, gifts, etc.
- **Children in Care Achievement Awards and Talent Show** - Following the success of the art show, an achievement award night is scheduled in the Autumn to recognise the achievement of our looked after children in the following categories; Inspiration, Learning, Sport, Contribution to Community and Creativity. This is a highly popular event that offers every child in care the

opportunity to perform on stage on their own, within a group or with children from their foster carer family.

- **Take Part Thursday** - Children in care are invited to join in the fun and activities and this has provided the opportunities to develop a friendship group as well as their social and emotional skills. The feedback from CiC and their carers has been very positive. Activities have included Forest School, games tournament in the park, multi sports session, artwork and games, nature trail, picnic in the park, Hibaldstow Sky team day and party day. Good fun is had by all. We aim to build on this and have invited corporate parenting champions to explore the opportunities their own service areas and organisations can offer with a view to expanding the number of children partaking in a wider variety of activities.

Other workshops are run throughout the year in consultation with children and young people in care, for example recent workshops have included 'make a film in a week'.

Support Groups and Consultation Activities for Foster Carers and Looked After Children

The Fostering Service recognises the importance of involving Foster Carers in the development of the service. A number of systems have been developed that enable carers to contribute to these developments, they also give and receive support from other foster carers.

- **Foster Carer's Association** – The association is well established in North Lincolnshire. The association is a group of foster carers that elect their own Chair to represent North Lincolnshire Foster Carers. They act as a consultation, information and advice body and are able to liaise with the Fostering Service on any issues that affect foster carers. They hold regular support group meetings and social activities including a fortnightly meeting at a local soft play area.
- **Bi-monthly Information Meetings** - The Fostering Service facilitates a bi-monthly evening meeting with senior managers and is open to all foster carers. The aim of the meeting is to offer carers the opportunity of discussing issues with senior people within the organisation and to allow information and ideas to be exchanged. The evenings are also used as training events and various people such as representatives from the Looked After Children's Education Service, the Transport Team, the Contact Team, the Children's Advocate and the Children in Care Nurse have all previously been invited to talk about the work they do.
- **Foster Carer's Coffee Morning** - Foster carers hold a fortnightly coffee morning to get together to share information and have time for the children to play together. These are arranged by a foster carer and supported by the fostering team. Senior managers will be invited to these meetings on a regular basis for foster carers to ask questions, share feedback and build relationships with them.
- **Children in Care Council** - There are three groups spanning across all age ranges for children in care who are fostered, living in children's homes, children of foster carers, privately fostered

children and adopted children. The groups meet fortnightly, during term time. They have been consulted on various issues that are relevant to young people living in care.

- **Creative Conversation Events** - North Lincolnshire Council has established a creative conversation forum between the Children in Care Council and senior managers directly involved with the strategic and operational development of services for children in care. Children in Care and care leavers have the opportunity to discuss any topics relevant to their health, wellbeing and care and will shape future service delivery.
- **Annual Health Day** - Young people are encouraged to plan and participate in this event. The focus is on relevant health topics and representatives from other agencies attend to offer support and advice on a number of health aspects such as drug and alcohol misuse, teenage pregnancy, developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle and keeping yourself safe.
- **Support Group for Children of Foster Carers** - A support group and a series of events has been set up which runs monthly and is facilitated by a fostering support worker.



8. FOSTER CARER TRAINING

Core Training Elements - All potential foster carers must attend the Skills to Foster course as part of their assessment and training to equip them as proficient foster carers. There are core training elements in the course that are considered essential for a foster carer to undertake. These are:

- Role of the Foster Carer
- Safeguarding Children
- Health and Safety

TSD Training - All foster carers will be expected to complete Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) in the first nine months of approval, in order to demonstrate their ability to provide safe and effective foster care placements. Workshops are delivered to support this in addition to 1:1 sessions within the carers' home.

The standards support a three stage training framework for foster care:

- Pre-approval – this accounts for 60% of the TSD standards and potential foster carers must complete this prior to approval.

- Induction – post approval. All new foster carer approvals will be expected to complete the TSD Standards within 9 months of approval. All Connected People (family, friend and/or significant person) will be expected to complete these standards within 15 months of approval.
- Foster care development – the development and maintenance of a Professional and Personal Development Plan identifies and sets timescales for undertaking any relevant training.

Other training modules offered - Foster carers will be expected to undertake training as and when required to enable them to meet children's needs. The Adoption & Fostering Services Team produces an annual training programme, in consultation with carers.

The Foster Care Training Plan for 2018-2019 includes training courses and workshops available for foster carers on a wide range of relevant subjects as follows:

Required Training Courses

- Attachment and Development
- Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness
- Education: The Foster Carer's Role
- Diversity - An Introduction Workbook
- Paediatric First Aid
- Prevent Agenda
- Training Support and Development Standards Workshops

Advanced Training Courses

- Skills to Foster
- Advocacy and Communication
- Attachment Based Practice
- Attachment and Resilience: Impact of Self
- Child Sexual Exploitation – Advanced (Level 3)
- Child Development 0-19
- Coaching, Communication & Engagement Skills
- Child Protection and the Use of Substances - the Impact
- Diversity and Cultural Awareness
- Domestic Abuse - Impact on the Child Level 1, 2 and 3
- Food Hygiene E-Learning
- Early Permanence Training
- Neglect and the Impact on the Child Level 1
- Mental Health and Resilience
- Foster Carers Role in Adoption
- Quality Credit Framework (Previously NVQ)
- Relationship Building Through Play
- Therapeutic Toolkit - Sand-play, Objects and Exercises
- Safeguarding Adolescents and Understanding Risky Behaviour
- Theories and Approaches

- “Buckle up and enjoy the ride”

Training Involving Foster Carers and Children and Young People

- Legal Highs and Alcohol

E-Learning: Learning Lincs

- People Directorate Resource Library
- Community Care Inform

North Lincolnshire Council Fostering Services Team has policies and procedures for the assessment, approval, support and supervision, training and development of all foster carers. These will apply to all foster carers. However, family and friends/connected persons and short breaks carers will be treated in line with specific guidance and the agreed disapplication of certain regulatory requirements.

9. SERVICE MONITORING AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Supervision of Staff

All staff are supervised formally on a monthly basis where issues relating to individual foster carers, children in placement, fostering related matters, service delivery, training, career progression and corporate strategy and aspirations to improve service delivery are discussed. This is recorded and stored.

All staff are able to access the Practice Supervisors or Service Manager at all other times for the purposes of seeking guidance, support and advice in relation to any fostering related issue or corporate matter.

Placement Sufficiency Planning

Foster care recruitment drives occur regularly during the year. The frequency and focus of each drive is dictated by current as well as projected demand. The Adoption & Fostering Service Manager liaises with the Service Managers for Children’s Social Work Services and Integrated Services for Children with a Disability to ensure that the number of potential placement requirements is predicted.

File Audit

Audits are undertaken by Practice Supervisors and the Responsible Officer on a monthly basis. Senior Managers also undertake audits throughout the year. Random audits are also undertaken during supervision when specific issues are identified. Ad hoc audits of quality of recording on files and supervisory visits as well as frequency of visits and contact with carers are also undertaken.

Staff receive copies of their audits and any themes highlighted across audits are fed back to the staff group to identify positive models and highlight areas for improvement where necessary.

Observations of Staff

The Responsible Officer and Practice Supervisors undertake observations of staff. Staff receive feedback from the observations during supervision. Senior managers also undertake direct observations of staff and practice throughout the year including the Fostering Panel and supervision of staff.

Management Reports and Monthly Monitoring Reports

Monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly monitoring statistics and reports are prepared by the Practice Supervisors, Responsible Officer and the Information Team. This includes numbers of carers recruited, numbers of carers attending the skills to foster course, the number of assessments currently being undertaken by the fostering service, frequency of visits, number of foster families approved at foster panel, number of foster families deregistered at foster panel, number of foster carers being annually reviewed and reasons for delay, private fostering and connected persons regulatory compliance, the frequency and nature/content of the Children in Care meetings, staff vacancies, staff sickness, compliments received, agenda and issues raised from foster carer bi-monthly meetings, budget reports, health and safety related incidents, allegations, complaints, and number of exemptions etc.

Quality of Service

The fostering service was inspected by Ofsted in June/July 2017 and was graded as Outstanding. To ensure a high quality service is maintained, the Responsible Officer monitors performance against the Ofsted grade descriptors on a quarterly basis which is presented in a report to senior managers. An annual Fostering Dataset is collated and returned to Ofsted.

Panel reports

The fostering panel reports on issues of quality, timeliness and consistency through the panel advisor and written summaries prepared by the fostering panel chair and Agency Decision Maker.

Quarterly Fostering Services Team Business Reports are prepared and shared with the Fostering Panel and senior management team.

10. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE REGISTERED PROVIDER AND REGISTERED MANAGER

The Registered Provider: North Lincolnshire Council	
Tracy Eaden Hewson House Station Road Brigg North Lincolnshire DN20 8XT 01724 297024 07877 451813	Diploma In Social Work (DIPSW) PQ1 Post Qualifying Certificate Post Qualifying Child Care Award (PQCCA) Post Graduate Diploma in Child Welfare and Social Work Studies CMI level 7 post graduate diploma in strategic leadership and management
The Registered Manager: North Lincolnshire Council	

Jane Brennan Church Square House 30-40 High Street Scunthorpe North Lincolnshire DN15 6NL 01724 297024 07717587805	BA (Hons) Social Work Studies Post Qualifying Consolidation Module ILM 3 Leadership and Management
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Fostering services are delivered in North Lincolnshire through the North Lincolnshire Council Fostering Services team as detailed in the structure above.

12. STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The Adoption & Fostering Service is delivered and managed by staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge to do so in an efficient and effective manner. All staff are fully vetted and selected as being suitable to work with children and young people. They are managed trained, supervised and supported in order to ensure that the best possible outcomes for children in care are achieved. All employees are provided with appropriate written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. Personnel records of those working within the Fostering Services Team are kept at the Human Resources office.

Appropriate checks are made on all colleagues in partnership agencies to ensure they are professionally qualified and appropriately trained to work with children and young people, their families and foster carers and have a good understanding of foster care.

Where shortfalls in staffing levels occur there are contingency plans in place to resolve the situation, all members of the Adoption and Fostering Services Team having a working knowledge of each other's roles. If the designated Fostering Social Worker is not available i.e. on leave, training or sickness then the duty system ensures that any issues of concern from any foster carer, social worker and other professionals are dealt with in a timely manner.

Post Title	Gender	Qualifications of Current Post holder	Post-Qualification Experience
Responsible Officer	Female	Diploma In Social Work (DIPSW) PQ1 Post Qualifying Certificate Post Qualifying Child Care Award (PQCCA) Post Graduate Diploma in Child Welfare and Social Work Studies CMI level 7 Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management	1998
Practice Supervisor	Female	BA Hons Social Work Studies Post Qualifying Award consolidation ILM 3	2008
Practice Supervisor	Female	MA Social Work Studies	
Fostering Social Worker (0.5)	Female	BA Hons Social Work PQ Consolidating Practice	2010
Fostering Social Worker	Male	Diploma in Social Work Post Qualifying Award consolidation Diploma in Health and Social Welfare OU	1996
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BA Hons Social Work and D.I.P.S.W	2001
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BA Hons Social Work	

Fostering Recruitment Worker	Female	NVQ Level 3	
Fostering Social Worker (0.5)	Female	Bsc Hons in Social Work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation	2006
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BA Hons Social Work	2007
Fostering Social Worker (0.6)	Female	Diploma in Social Work NVQ level 4 Working with Children and Young People	2003
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BSC Hons Social Work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation	2012
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BA Hons social work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation	2012
Fostering Social Worker (0.5)	Female	BA Hons Community Studies MA Social Work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation	2011
Fostering Social Worker	Female	BA Hons Social Science MA Social Work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation	2012
Fostering Social Worker (0.8)	Female	BA Hons Social Work Post Qualifying Award Consolidation Practice Educator 1	2010
Fostering Social Worker	Female	Diploma in Social Work	1996

Agency Decision Makers

Name	Post	Decision to be made
Tom Hewis	Principal Social Worker – Children and Adults	To make decisions about the approval of foster carers.
Di Rees	Service Manager, FASST	To decide any terms of approval. To consider the first review of carers, and any other review if requested by the fostering service provider, and to make a decision on the continuing approval of carers. To make decisions on other matters, or cases referred by the fostering service provider, including termination of approval in some cases.



13. COMPLAINTS, REPRESENTATIONS AND IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

At times, foster carers and children in foster care may feel unhappy about the services they receive. The Adoption and Fostering Service works within North Lincolnshire Council's complaints procedures. In the first instance it is hoped that the Adoption and Fostering Service would attempt to deal with any complaint or representation, however, if this is felt inappropriate all foster homes have complaints information and leaflets that show how to complain and how complaints are dealt with. There are three stages to the complaint process and complainants have a right to contact the Local Government Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied following completion of stage three.



All children in foster care have direct access to the Children's Advocate:

Bev Goulding
Hewson House
Station Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ
Telephone 01724 296639
Mobile 07717586247

The Independent Complaints Officer is:

Lesley Cooper
Hewson House
Station Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ
Telephone 01724 296426

OFSTED

This is the inspecting body for fostering. The contact point for all questions, queries and complaints to Ofsted is via the central number, or you can email them.

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone 0300 123 1231
Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Rights Director for England

In addition to the North Lincolnshire complaints and representation procedures children, or adults acting on their behalf, have access to the Children's Rights Director for England.

The Office of the Children's Rights Director
St Nicholas Building
St Nicholas Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1NB
Free phone 0800 5280731
Website www.rights4me.org.uk
Email theteam.rights4me@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Children and Adults

David Rose
Conservative Group Office
Civic Centre
Ashby Road
Scunthorpe
DN16 1AB
Telephone 01724 297614
Mobile 077762056445
Email Cllr.davidrose@northlincs.gov.uk

14. CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE FOSTERING SERVICE

North Lincolnshire Fostering Service
Church Square House
30 – 40 High Street
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN15 6NL
Telephone 01724 297024



North Lincolnshire Council

Young Person's Statement of Purpose for Fostering 2018 - 2019



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The address of your local Fostering Service is;

North Lincolnshire Fostering Service
Church Square House
30 – 40 High Street
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN15 6NL

Telephone: 01724 297024

If you would like some help going through this Statement of Purpose then please ring us (or ask your parents to) on **01724 297024** and we will sort this out for you. Ask to speak to the Duty Fostering Social Worker.

The person who put this together is called Tracy Eaden and she is in charge of the Fostering Service. She is always interested to hear about what you think and to answer any questions you might have. You can contact her on **01724 297024** or by email tracy.eaden@northlincs.gov.uk

1. For Starters

Every Fostering Service has to write a Statement of Purpose. This is so that everyone knows what the Fostering Service does and also the rules that it has to follow.

Some of the rules that we have to follow are in these important papers;

- **National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011**
- **Fostering Services Regulations 2011**

These rules make sure that our Fostering Service does a good job at looking after all of our Foster Carers and our Children in Care. These rules also help us to make sure that any new people who become Foster Carers for us have the help and support they need to be able to welcome our children in care into a safe and loving Foster Family.

You should have a chance to see this Statement of Purpose. So, we make sure it is on the Council's webpages www.northlincs.gov.uk and you can ask for a copy of it anytime from your Social Worker or you Foster Family's Fostering Social Worker.

Every year we update this so that you can see what we will be doing and what we want to achieve.

The people who check we are doing what we need to do are from **Ofsted** and their details are;

OFSTED

Piccadilly Street

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231

Email; enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

In June 2017 the Fostering Services that we provide were inspected by Ofsted. Some of our children and young people in care met with the Ofsted Inspector. The Ofsted Inspector listened to the feedback that they gave about the Fostering Service.

In September 2017 the Ofsted Report was published and North Lincolnshire's Fostering Services were judged as '**Outstanding**'.

Some of the feedback we have had about our Fostering Service including some feedback from our children in care, Foster Carers and our children who foster have this to say about our fostering service;

‘The support is always there when you need it’ (Foster Child)

‘My Fostering Social Worker is very approachable. She makes us feel at ease and spends time talking to my girls.’ (Foster Carer)

‘Our Fostering Social Worker has given me lots of support outside school and helped me get school counselling. Our Fostering Social Worker is very kind.’ (Child who fosters, aged 14)

Our Fostering Social Worker is absolutely lovely. She is always at the end of the phone when I need anything. She’s always got the information I need and she’s really good at finding things out for me. She’s very helpful.’ (Foster carer)

We want the Fostering Service to continue to be outstanding and to do this we will make sure that we listen to your suggestions. We want you to tell us what is working well and if you think there is something we can be doing better. The different ways you can contact us are included in this Statement of Purpose.

2. What Fostered Young People say we should do

Every month our Children in Care Council hold three groups that any of our children and young people in care can attend. EPIC is for children aged 8 - 12 years old, TEENS is for young people aged 13 – 16 years old and BIZZ is for young people aged 16+ and all the way up to 25 years old. The groups meet and as well as having fun, our Children in Care Council members do important work, to make sure that the Voice of the Child in Care is heard & to make a difference.

Here are some of the things that the children and young people who attend these groups said the Fostering Service should do;

- Help with any troubles
- Give information
- Give support
- Be friendly
- Listen to young people
- Be nice to people
- Treat people fairly



3. What the Fostering Service will do

We will do all of the above and...

- You are all different and have your own opinions so we will listen to you in how best to support you and your family.
- We will ask you what you think about the Fostering Service. This helps us find out the best way we can help.
- We will ask you for any ideas about things we can do.
- What you say is always important to us.
- We will be respectful.
- We will always be available to help with troubles.
- We will give information about the support and services we provide. We will make sure that we do this by talking and also by writing things down.
- We will try and answer all your questions. Sometimes the answer may be difficult to hear and so we will always be around to support you and to help you work it out.
- It's important that you are safe and that you are given every chance to succeed and this means having a goal for your future. We will do whatever we can to help with this.



Examples of Services we will provide for you;

- We can give you a Children's Guide to Fostering.
- We can help with collecting memories and in collecting information for your life story book.
- We can try and help sort out things to do with contact.
- Sometimes you may need to talk to someone else, like a therapist. This can be the case when things feel very complicated and space and time is needed to work some things out. A therapist can sometimes help to do this. Or, it could be that your Social worker or fostering social worker is the best person to help you do this. Either way, we will help you find someone you can talk to on a one to one.
- We will make sure you have the dates for any of our activity days called "Take Part Thursdays" which take place during the school holidays and dates of our Children in Care Council groups held each month.
- We can arrange different training, for example, we can help schools understand a little more about what it is like to be fostered. Or, you might want to learn about something in particular and if you let us know then we might be able to arrange it.
- Every year we will also invite you to a;
 - ✓ Summer Fun Day
 - ✓ Christmas Party
 - ✓ Christmas Pantomime trip
 - ✓ Flamingoland Trip



4. Useful Information

In North Lincolnshire, if you are ever unhappy with your foster carer or the fostering service, you can always speak to your Social Worker or your foster family's Fostering. You can also speak to one of the Practice Supervisors in Fostering Called Mahlah Smith and Jane Brennan. They are managers in the fostering service and want to make sure that all of our Foster Carers and Children in Care have a positive experience of Fostering so will always be happy to talk to you if you have any worries or concerns. You can contact Mahlah or Jane at Mahlah.smith@northlincs.gov.uk or Jane.brennan@northlincs.gov.uk or write to them at the below address.

**Fostering Service
North Lincolnshire Council
Church Square House,
Church Square
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN15 6NL**

Or, you can speak to a Fostering Duty Worker on **01724 297024** and ask that they tell Mahlah or Jane that you want to speak to them.

Making a Complaint

If you are really unhappy with the Adoption and Fostering Service and you have tried to tell us but you don't think that it has been sorted then you can contact the Complaints Person and she is called Lesley Cooper. Contact details are;

**The Complaints Representations Manager
North Lincolnshire Council
People Directorate
Hewson House
Station Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ**

Telephone Number 01724 296426

Email Lesley.Cooper@northlincs.gov.uk

If you remain unsatisfied with our response you may wish to contact the **Local Government Ombudsman on 0300 061 0614.**

Another Useful Contact:

The Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner for England promotes and protects children's rights in England. The Commissioner does this by listening to what children and young people say about what matters to them and making sure adults in charge take their views and interests into account. Contact details are;

**The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT**

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

