



# Independent Fostering Service Statement Of Purpose



**Ofsted URN:**

**2503134**

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Date Reviewed: June 2025

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## 01 Statement of Purpose (SOP)

This SOP has been developed in accordance with:

- The Care Standards Act 2000.
- The Fostering Service Regulations 2011. (as amended 2013 & 2015)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)
- The Children Act 1989, and The Children Act 2004.
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement & Case Review 2010.
- Delegation of Authority: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review 2010 (July 2013)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendment to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (July 2013)
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (amended 2013 & 2015)
- The Children and Families Act 2014.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018 and United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) 2021.

This SOP is available to suitable individuals upon request.

This SOP is reviewed annually, and the Registered Manager will keep this SOP under review and where appropriate revise.

All amended versions will be shared with

- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (CIECSS, - Ofsted)
- Any person working for or in partnership with CFS Care Fostering Service, members of the public, local authorities and any child or young person placed with one of our foster carers, and any parent of that child or young person.

The SOP is available on CFS Care Website.

## 02 Introduction

CFS Care Fostering is a therapeutically informed Independent Fostering Agency (IFA). We provide care for children and young people who require a stable and loving home.

In her survey for the Fostering review, the Children's Commissioner found that: The majority stated that the best thing about care was their foster family, and feeling like 'part of the family.' Some young people indicated that they viewed their foster carers as 'their mum and dad,' and the foster carers' children as their brothers and sisters." "*Fostering Better Outcomes, The Government response to the Education Select Committee report into fostering and Foster Care in England 2018.*"

Children's needs – and views – are the driving force for all decisions made. Our children need stable lives, feel cared for and to benefit from high quality foster care for as long as they need it.

### 03 Mission Statement

To have a positive impact on the children and young people we support throughout their journey.

### 04 Values

We foster Resilience.  
We must be Accountable.  
We are Inclusive.  
We celebrate Success.  
We do Empower.

### 05 Our Aim and objectives

To provide the best possible outcomes for children who are unable to live with their own families and provide our children with the best possible experiences and opportunities.

To provide high quality support and care from admission to transition, with longevity of outcomes for the longer-term future.

We pride ourselves on stickability and the atmosphere we aim to create and uphold is one of a supportive and nurturing nature, which celebrates differences and embraces individuality.

In determining our model of support and care we use a 'can do' attitude to explore all that can be achieved for our children to successfully move on in life.

Our aim is to give maximum opportunity for children to achieve their true and positive potential by affording equal opportunity, encouragement for personal growth considering ethnicity, culture, religion and sexual orientation.

We want our children to choose a future lifestyle that is purposeful, law abiding and risk free.

We do this by:

- Supporting children, foster carers and staff to actively contribute towards decisions.
- Taking proper account of views, wishes and feelings.
- Proactively seeking foster carer feedback.
- Children completing participation work,
- Ensuring our children understand their rights and entitlements, as well as their responsibilities.
- Actively listen to and hear what our children have to say and take appropriate actions.
- Nurturing close relationships between children and supervising social workers (SSW). Extended child visits are in place to promote quality time between SSW and child.
- Developing professional foster carers who respect and value diversity and encourage children to develop a positive self-image and identity.
- Providing an out-of-hour service that offers support and guidance to foster parents.
- Providing our social work staff with reflective supervision from our own in-house therapist, allowing them to offer therapeutically informed, high-quality support to our carers, children and young people.

### 06 Belonging

We support children to reconcile the past, present and the future. This involves advocating on behalf of the child/young person to receive life story work. This includes ensuring our children can build and maintain friendships.

We provide safe opportunities for children and young people to remain with their siblings, have family time with their siblings and birth family members. CFS strongly promote siblings living together. Many children living with CFS foster carers are sibling groups. We support our foster carers to safely promote and facilitate family time wherever possible, and within the constraints of the child's care plan.

We advocate for inclusive practice within schools and other settings for those with complex needs. CFS will advocate on behalf of children to ensure the child's educational needs are fully met. We empower our carers with the knowledge and confidence to challenge decisions where children's needs or voices are being overlooked.

Distance to schools and transport are two important aspects in maintaining links to communities.

We recruit a diverse range of foster carers from various backgrounds in a safe, efficient, effective, and timely manner to meet the diverse needs of children and young people referred to CFS Care Fostering Services.

The service we provide is one that works for children, one that is focused upon meeting their needs, supporting positive ambition, and fulfilling their potential. We do this by celebrating children's achievements and successes.

We work collaboratively with local authorities and other agencies in support of our young people and foster carers.

Provide a supportive environment in which children and young people benefit from a natural transition into adulthood.

## **07 Putting people first**

At CFS Care, our people are our greatest assets. We are committed to attracting, nurturing, and retaining the best individuals to achieve the best outcomes. We value hard work, exceptional conduct, and a strong commitment to professionalism that aligns with our core values and objectives.

Everyone involved with CFS Care plays a crucial role in delivering the highest standards of care. However, we recognise that empowered and informed foster carers are central to achieving the best possible outcomes for children. We value the unique contributions of both foster carers and the children in their care, and we place a strong emphasis on teamwork to ensure consistently high-quality practice across the agency.

We are committed to making foster carers feel respected and valued—not only as caregivers but also as professionals. To support this, we provide:

- Regular support meetings
- A comprehensive training program, including ongoing refresher sessions.
- Opportunities for professional development and reflective supervision
- Individual support and tuition from a dedicated staff member to enable newly approved carers to complete their TSD workbook within their first year of approval.

Balancing safety with the development of independence in children is both a skill and a challenge. Our foster carers are supported in navigating everyday family life while safeguarding the children in their care. We use tailored risk assessments and reflective supervision to ensure carers have the information and insight needed to make informed decisions. This approach enables growth, encourages exploration, and promotes resilience in the young people we support.

## 08 Our Principles of Responsible Care & Practice

- We promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing by monitoring children's health and promote an active lifestyle through activities and clubs.
- We encourage and support children's education by monitoring school attendance, addressing any areas of concern, advocating on behalf of our children when they do not have access to the educational support they require and supporting carers to meet the educational needs of the children in their care.
- We encourage children and young people to participate in making decisions, both about their lives but also about how we operate as an agency.
- We provide preparation for independence for all ages in supporting children and young people to gain the knowledge and skills required for social and economic independence in adulthood.
- Each child or young person who accesses CFS services will benefit from having long term savings.

## 09 A Therapeutic Fostering Service

We have made a commitment to our foster carers and children to work through a trauma-informed lens in every aspect of our work. We are committed to working in this way as evidence demonstrates that healing can happen through safe and reliable relationships. Our commitment to the service wide development of therapeutic approaches consists of:

- An inhouse therapeutic training program for all our foster carers at all stages in their careers. This is face-to-face training that includes up to date research and best practices around developmental trauma, neuroscience, child development and therapeutic parenting.
- Clear processes at the point of a child initially placed with our foster carers; this involves our Therapist, foster carers and Supervising Social Worker meeting on four occasions during the first 12 weeks of the placement.
- A referral system for our team to refer Foster Carers for a one-to-one session with the Therapist. These sessions are psychodynamic in nature and integrate different modalities to support self-awareness, connection, regulation, repair and communication.
- Space for the Foster Carers to reflect on their experience upon a placement unexpectedly ending and prepare them to move forward.
- An outcomes measure tool to support us in assessing the child/young person holistically. This will inform support packages, identify need and evidence our practice.

## 10 Referral, admission and placement

Whenever young people enter the care system it is a very distressing time in their life. With CFS' support and guidance, children can be placed in safe and supportive environments where they can thrive. We place those in our care at the heart of everything we do with the goal of changing futures for the better.

Our careful matching process will determine if the Fostering Service can meet a child's needs. The experience and skills of our carers inform us of the recommended approval range during assessment. We use the information we have about a child and carefully match a carer's skill, knowledge, experience, and ability to meet that child's needs, along with the support the agency can provide to the placement.

Where possible we aim for our placements to begin with planned introductions between carers and

children. Ideally this would happen in person, but where this is not possible video calls may be used, and the child's social worker will be provided with the carer's "welcome to our home" booklet to share with the child.

Our supervising social workers take the lead in matching and placing children, as they have a close working relationship with their carers.

We offer a range of placement solutions and working collaboratively with all external agencies enables us to offer safe, stable and 'needs-focused' care arrangements.

Our services include:

- Mainstream Fostering
- Short notice emergency care arrangements
- Short term care arrangements providing care whilst plans are made for long term care arrangements,
- Long-term care arrangements, with the view of offering permanency and where adoption is not an option.
- Solo care arrangements, with experienced, skilled foster carers
- Sibling care arrangements, supporting siblings to stay together.
- Bridging care arrangements.
- Short breaks care arrangements
- Transitions from residential to a family home

All of our placements, staff and carers are therapeutically informed, and this theme runs through everything we do, enabling us to offer the highest quality support to children with complex needs.

Whatever their circumstances, we believe that children need reassurance, kindness and love and that our empathic and trauma-informed foster carers are able to provide this.

## 11 Children's guide

Every child and young person placed with our foster carers receives their own copy of the Children's Guide. This guide is introduced and explained to them by their Supervising Social Worker (SSW) or their allocated support worker, ensuring they understand its contents in a supportive and age-appropriate way.

We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of all children and young people. As such, the guide is available in a variety of formats and can be adapted using engaging activities and fun games to suit different learning styles and communication needs. Where required, it can also be translated into different languages or alternative formats to ensure full accessibility.

The purpose of the Children's Guide is to:

- Help children and young people understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Inform them of the support available while they are in foster care.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of the professionals involved in their care.
- Ensure they know how to raise concerns or make a complaint if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care.

At CFS Care, we value and respect diversity. We strive to ensure that every child feels heard, supported, and empowered from the moment they enter our care.

## 12 Fostering Panel

Our Fostering Panel consists of independent members with a range of skills and experience. We are consistently addressing the importance of ensuring our central list is as diverse as possible by actively recruiting members from diverse backgrounds, expertise, skills, and experiences.

We have ten members on our panel. Contact details are available from HR on request.

Feedback from applicants and Social Workers' experience of the Panel is discussed with panel members as part of our development.

### Annual reviews

Our foster carer's continuing suitability is assessed and reviewed annually. Foster carers are presented to the fostering panel for their first, third and fifth annual home reviews. This is a formal process in which the supervising social worker reports on the progress/strengths, training and support needs of the foster carers, and considers the views of all the fostering household members, the Local Authority of any children placed and other involved professionals such as those from education and health.

## 13 Foster care induction and training

Pre-approval and during their assessment, foster carers are expected to attend, in accordance with regulatory requirements, our Skills to foster course. Following approval, carers complete face-to-face inductions with their supervising social worker and our administration and training staff.

Foster carers are offered 1-1 individualised support throughout the completion of their TDS. Home visits/peer support and workshops are offered to all carers until the completion of their workbook.

Foster carers are provided with virtual and face-to-face training opportunities, and we use The Training Hub to allocate virtual mandatory and essential training. Carers are provided with a training matrix which offers training expectations and timescales for completion.

We provide foster carers with relevant safeguarding training including CSE, CCE, social media and internet safety awareness training.

Foster carers are encouraged to complete additional training in line with the needs of the child/ren they care for. The agency is able to source specialist training for staff and carers to assist with particular issues if required.

## 14 Workforce

Our workforce is described in our workforce development plan including our approach to:

- Management and staffing structure including management of services when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave.
- On call procedures
- Recruitment process
- Timescales and process for staff completing induction/probation.
- Core training, including training required to deliver what is set out in the statement of purpose.
- Time scales and approach to supervision/appraisal including record keeping.
- Experience and qualifications of all staff working within the staffing structure.
- Process for managing and improving poor performance linked to organisational policies.

### Staff Recruitment

Recruitment takes place in accordance with organisational policies, safer recruitment practice and the workforce plan. Prior to appointment all staff are subject to an enhanced Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) check, references and validation of previous employment history. Thereafter, vetting through DBS will occur on a three yearly basis. The records are held centrally on our HR Breathe system and available for relevant inspections on request. Registration with Social Work England is checked annually.

### Supervision

All staff receive regular formal and informal supervision from their line manager. Additionally, regular staff meetings and practice discussions are maintained. Staff supervision records are maintained in accordance with good practice and all new staff must successfully complete a mandatory induction, which includes reviews, shadowing and mentoring.

All core staff receive an annual appraisal, following their 6-month probationary period. The senior management team work closely together to discuss, review, and implement any further training needs that are highlighted during the appraisal process. This seeks to ensure that all staff have the qualifications, skills and knowledge to provide a high standard of support and care.

Therapeutic supervision for support workers and social workers takes place once a month.

### Induction

A four-week induction program is offered to all new staff. Mandatory and core training is expected to be completed within the probation period. The training comprises online training via The Training Hub and face to face training.

All staff training is recorded on HR Breathe and reviewed monthly by the fostering administrator and shared with the Registered Manager.

## **15 Support groups / services / visits**

We provide support for foster carers in line with their individual needs. CFS fostering Service places great value upon the work foster carers undertake and the tremendous contribution they make. Effective support for families who foster is vitally important to stability.

### Support groups

Monthly support groups are offered to all carers and provide peer support. The groups are chaired by a member of our team and matters can be raised if required. We have themes for each session to invite carers to share their experiences with one another. Themes can include self-care, managing transitions and holidays. We run a session during the day and the evening to ensure the majority of our carers can attend.

We encourage foster carer cluster groups, so all adults and children know each other- this is an extended arm of support and carers enjoy arranging events and meet ups- offering practical and emotional support to each other.

As new carers are approved, they are linked up with more experienced carers, offering an additional arm of support.

Carers receive a holiday allowance to use towards a family holiday or fund a short breaks arrangement.

### On call

Carers have access to advice and guidance outside of office hours, every day of the year. This service is run by the supervising social workers and the fostering senior management team.

### Financial support

Carers are offered a generous financial package that values the skills and commitment of foster carers. Additional allowances are available to support carers financially with taking children on holidays, buying school uniforms and personalising bedrooms ready for new children arriving. Carers have access to a foster carers finance handbook.

### Foster talk

Foster talk is a nationally recognised organisation for fostering advice, practice guidance, training, and independent support for both foster parents and fostering services alike. CFS carers benefit from an individual membership with Foster Talk which provides independent support and advocacy in the event of foster carers becoming the subject of an allegation. Foster Talk delivers Foster line, free independent advice and support service on behalf of the Department for Education.

### Foster carer handbook

All foster carers are provided with a 'foster carer handbook,' which contains invaluable information and guidance.

### Unannounced Visits

CFS Care Foster carers receive two unannounced visits per reporting period. Additional visits can be completed if required. This is a great opportunity to ensure the standards of care are being met and to address any concerns within the visit.

SSW see children alone within unannounced visits and bi-monthly within extended child visits. This is recorded by the SSW on Charms which is the CFS Fostering IT system.

### Fostering support service

Support workers work within a child's therapeutic care plan. They assist foster carers in meeting the children's needs and are able to provide carers with valuable respite when things become challenging. Support workers can offer direct advice and guidance to carers and also offer task centered work with children and young people. They engage children and young people in activities inside and outside of the home and can also work on independence skills with our older young people.

### Charms Electronic recording system

All foster carers have access to an electronic recording system including policies. Our carers are supported and encouraged to complete daily logs of the children's journey in placement, and also to provide written significant incident reports when required, which are shared directly with the child's LA social worker.

## **16 Monitoring and compliance**

The Registered Manager Sarah-Jane Thornton has day-to-day responsibility and oversight of the Fostering service.

We are continually seeking opportunities to improve our service and weekly compliance data is run off the electronic recording system Charms and monitored via weekly compliance meetings including weekly risk management meetings and monthly Senior Management team meetings.

The senior leadership team monitors the effectiveness of the:

- Strategic Vision
- Quality Assurance and Performance
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all stakeholders.
- Financial Governance
- Policies and Procedures

- Complaints and compliments

The CFS Care Board meets monthly and has overall governance responsibilities.

## 17 Safeguarding

CFS Care fostering safeguarding and safer care guidelines are applied to everyone and there are no exceptions. Safer Care guidelines are in place to provide an assurance of safer practice and based on the following principles.

- We actively seek the views, wishes and feelings of young people including sufficient knowledge of individual communication needs.
- Children have unhindered access to a trusted, suitable adult.
- Children are aware of the help they can receive from independent advocacy services and relevant external agencies.
- Open and transparent to the external world, external scrutiny,
- Contact with families, the wider community and external agencies.
- Staff and foster carers are trained in all aspects of safeguarding including contextual safeguarding and online safety.
- Staff and foster carers are alert to children's individual risks and vulnerabilities and every child has an individual risk assessment and management plan which is updated regularly.
- There are clear and accessible procedures for referring to safeguarding concerns. There are clear and effective allegations and complaints procedures which are readily accessible to all.
- Reasonable precautions are in place to respond to allegations, with an emphasis upon maintaining positive relationships and ensuring due process is responsibly and sensitively administered.
- Bullying is effectively countered.
- Recruitment and assessment procedures are rigorous.
- There is effective supervision and support.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures are in place which are regularly revisited in supervision and team meetings.
- There is unequivocal respect for diversity, race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, and disability.
- Staff and foster carers are alert and informed about risks of harm from people prepared to exploit the vulnerability of children in care.
- Children are offered support who have been abused, which is defined by their individual needs, relevant plans, and effective collaborative working practice.
- Ensure the foster home is a safe space.
- Protect children and young people from abuse by adults and other children and young people in the household.
- Promote natural, healthy emotional and physical development, as well as educational achievement and opportunities that will enhance and expand life experiences and personal ambition.
- Children & young people feel valued and respected, and their self-esteem is promoted.
- All commissioned staff are checked and supervised when in contact with children and young people.

Our safeguarding policies give clear directions to staff about the expected behavior and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our young people. Our safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines are designed to be accessible and cover the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Countering Bullying (Inc. Cyberbullying)
- Countering Child Sexual and child criminal exploitation (CSE and CCE)
- Missing from care.
- Safer Recruitment
- Substance Misuse
- Whistleblowing
- County lines
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Safe medication handling
- Health and safety.
- Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

All policies including BCP are available on request.

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is registered Manager Sarah – Jane Thornton and her absence Deputy Manager Rebecca Clarke. In the event of both manager absence it is Care and Compliance Director Rikke McIntosh. The overall company responsibility is CEO and Responsible Individual Kim York.

#### Data Protection Officer (DPO)

The DPO is HR Director Emma Buxton. The company is registered with the Information Commissioners' Office (ICO).

#### Health and safety

An assessment of each foster home is completed during assessment and updated on a yearly basis. This includes ensuring appropriate insurance is in place for both homes and vehicles. Any pets in the foster home are also assessed annually to ensure they do not pose risks to placed children.

## **18 Complaints**

We recognise that working with and for people means things may not always go as planned. When this happens, we see it as an opportunity to put things right, identify learning outcomes, and ensure a fair and reasonable resolution is achieved.

We welcome complaints as a valuable form of feedback that helps us improve the quality of our service. We have a robust and accessible complaints procedure, which is available upon request.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

Our complaints policy is open to:

- Children and young people in our care
- Foster carers
- Parents or family members
- Social workers and other professionals
- Any individual who has contact with any aspect of CFS Care

## Information for children

Before or as soon as a young person arrives at CFS Care, they are provided with both written and verbal information on how to make a complaint. It is the responsibility of the Supervising Social Worker (SSW) to ensure the child or young person understands the process and knows what to expect.

The Children's Guide also includes details about the complaint's procedure, including contact information for key individuals and external support services.

## Children's Commissioner for England

Dame Rachel de Souza is the current Children's Commissioner for England, and her role is highlighted in the Children's Guide. The Children's Commissioner promotes and protects the rights of children and young people, particularly those living away from home or in care. The Commissioner listens to children's views, champions their voice, and supports families.

Contact Details:

Phone: 0800 528 0731  
Email: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

## Advocacy and external support

Children also receive information about how to contact:

- Independent advocacy services
- Their social worker or placing authority representatives.

Children can contact these professionals privately and free of charge.

## How complaints are handled

All complaints are managed with appropriate regard for confidentiality and information-sharing protocols. We are committed to responding promptly and in accordance with the timeframes outlined in our formal complaint procedure.

## Complaints to Ofsted

Complaints can also be made directly to Ofsted, which oversees the regulation and inspection of fostering services.

Contact Ofsted:

Phone: 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

In some cases, Ofsted may request that CFS Care investigates a complaint and reports the outcome. Alternatively, Ofsted may choose to carry out its own inspection.

## 19 Access to policies

CFS Care have comprehensive and carefully implemented policies. These are available to all stakeholders. We aim to ensure that support and clarification is readily available to children, adults and other relevant agencies who experience difficulties in accessing our policies. Policies will be provided on request.

## 20 Staffing structure

The Strategic Leadership Team is led by Kim York (CEO) and comprises of Business Development Director, Care and Compliance Director, Finance Director, HR Director and Clinical Lead.

The SLT Terms of reference are quarterly meetings.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises of the SLT, Regional Manager, Registered Service Managers Supported Accommodation, IFA Registered Manager and Head of Care for Children's homes. The SMT Terms of reference are monthly meetings.

<b>Chairman Board of Directors</b>	Graham Baker
<b>CEO and Responsible Individual</b>	Kim York
<b>Registered Manager</b>	Sarah-Jane Thornton
<b>Deputy Manager</b>	Rebecca Clarke
<b>Supervising Social worker</b>	Nicole Monaghan Zsuzsa Bakai-Kiss
<b>Recruitment and support worker</b>	Debbie Bradshaw
<b>Support worker</b>	James Jackson Vacancy
<b>Fostering Administrator</b>	Alison Drake
<b>Panel chair</b>	Frank Ward
<b>Vice chair</b>	Phil Smith
<b>ADM</b>	Kath Vereycken
<b>IRO</b>	Karen Shepard
<b>Clinical Lead Psychotherapist Inhouse Therapist</b>	Rebecca Bowen Clare Warland
<b>Finance Director</b> Finance assistant Finance administrator Property maintenance admin Assistance accountant Maintenance operative	Charlotte Campbell Claire Walsh Lisa Fulton Kirsty Abson Victoria Morris Phil Hughes
<b>Business Development Director</b> Marketing assistant Admin assistant	Sian Hodson Lucy Cooper Charlotte Baron
<b>HR Director</b> Senior HR assistant HR admin HR Generalist	Emma Buxton Samantha Flatley Rachel Hall Helen Riley
<b>Care and Compliance Director</b>	Rikke McIntosh

See separate Statement of Purpose for Supported Accommodation and Children's homes.