



# Ryancare Fostering



## Ryancare Fostering Statement of Purpose



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# Section 01

## Introduction



This Statement of Purpose has been produced to provide information to all interested parties, including:

- Any person working for the purpose of the fostering service
- Any Foster Carer or prospective Foster Carer of the fostering service
- Any child placed with a Foster Carer by the fostering service, and their parents
- Local Authority partners and relevant stakeholders

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.



This Statement of Purpose and the service we provide has been developed in accordance with and reflects appropriate legislation and guidance:

The agency is committed to the delivery of a service meeting the standards of care detailed below, which are compatible with statutory and regulatory requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011) (Amendments 2013);
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England 2011)
- The Care Planning and Fostering (England) Regulations 2010 (Amendments 2013) (Miscellaneous Amendments 2015)
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018 and other national frameworks
- National Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided, and/or made available upon request, to:

- Ofsted/Chief Inspector
- Any person working for the purposes of the fostering service
- Any child (subject to their age and understanding) placed with a Foster Carer of the fostering service and the parent of any such child

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Senior Management Team.

# Section 02

## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision

We will build incredible futures by empowering vulnerable children and young adults in the UK to be happy and make their way in the world.

### Our Mission

Every day we improve the lives of those we educate and look after, their families and communities through a relentless focus on learning and caring.

### Our Values

#### Open & Honest

- Be fair and transparent.
- Do the right thing.
- Be respectful.

#### Deliver Promises

- Be accountable.
- Take responsibility.
- Be committed.

#### Dream Big

- Make positive changes.
- Aspire and Achieve.
- Be ambitious.

#### Be Inclusive

- Value diversity.
- Create safe, nurturing environments.
- Care about each other and what we do.

### OneTeam

Together we inspire trust, happiness and an infectious passion to accomplish our vision.



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## The aims and objectives of the agency are:

- To provide a high quality service for looked after children and young people of all ages whose needs have been assessed by the responsible Local Authority as being best met by placement with a foster carer
- To ensure children and young people are only placed with carers who have been recruited, assessed, approved and reviewed in accordance with statutory regulation and national standards and guidance
- To support, supervise and provide on-going training to carers so that they are able to provide a comprehensive service that addresses the physical, emotional, educational and health needs of the children and young people placed with them
- To promote positively the concept of fostering
- To bring together carers who will support, educate and inform each other and who will work in partnership with all relevant professionals, agencies and families involved in the child's life
- To continually develop and improve our services and not to compromise on standards. To this aim we seek internal and external evaluation and feedback on our work

## Objectives

- The agency in pursuit of its stated aims and objectives, will employ policies, practices and procedures which will seek at all times:
- To ensure the provision of high quality care to children and young people in a safe, healthy and nurturing family setting
- To meet the individual child's particular needs and promote their best interests, in accordance with the care plan
- To have 24 hour support for carers, children and young people
- To protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation
- To value diversity and promote equality, by recognising the importance of a child's ethnic origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background; and to consider fully a child's gender, sexuality and any disability they may have
- To develop the child's sense of identity and self-worth
- To promote the child's health and wellbeing, including their physical, mental and emotional welfare
- To promote educational achievement and attainment
- To promote and support agreed contact with the child's family and friends, in accordance with the care plan
- To prepare the child for adult life through the development of relevant life skills and acquisition of the knowledge necessary to achieve this; providing opportunity for lifelong relationships
- To seek the views and opinions of children and promote participation alongside, their families and carers to inform the planning and delivery of the agency's services



- To recruit individuals and families from all parts of the community. With different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and life experiences, thereby offering local authorities a range of placements, reflecting the wide range of children's needs
- To achieve consistently high standards when recruiting and assessing carers
- To have a properly constituted and independent Panel to consider assessments and make recommendations to the agency regarding the award, review, rejection or termination of approvals
- To ensure consistency and continuity in the supervision, support and information carers receive
- To provide accessible training that enables carers to develop their skills and knowledge so as to better meet the needs of children placed with them
- To offer placements that carefully match the particular needs of the child to the carer's skills, experiences and circumstances
- To regularly review the stability of placements in order to ensure support packages remain relevant and resourced, minimising the potential for placement breakdown and poor outcomes for children
- To be a responsible and competent employer; recruiting and employing an adequate number of appropriately experienced and qualified staff, who are able to meet the needs of carers and children, placed with them
- To ensure the agency is organisationally sound and properly structured
- To have procedures in place to control and supervise the agency's activities
- To have arrangements in place to control and supervise the agency's finances, which are based on sound financial principles and recognised good practice
- To organise and manage the agency's resources effectively to ensure the best possible service delivery and the safety of children
- To maintain the skill and knowledge base of casual or independent staff, managers and panel members by providing effective training and staff development programmes
- To monitor and review agency policies, procedures and practice on a regular basis
- To implement administrative procedures and practices so that management and staff are able to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner
- To maintain secure, separate and accurate records or children, carers and staff and ensure access to such records, in line with legislation

## Section 03

# Status & Constitution

Ryancare Fostering is one of a number of fostering agencies owned and managed by the National Fostering Group having been acquired in 2019.

Senior Management is made up from within the National Fostering Group, who meet regularly and are responsible for the strategic direction and financial management of the organisation, with day-to-day responsibility remaining with the Registered Manager.

Senior management objectives include:

- Strategic vision and direction
- A child and family centred culture, values and principles
- Quality assurance
- An annual business plan in-line with children's and service users' needs
- Developing the service in-line with best practice
- Financial management to ensure best value to local authorities
- Assimilation of new legislation and regulations into practice

The Agency is continually evolving and developing; growing in order to provide a national service whilst providing local offices throughout the UK. Our regional services are integrated into the Agency ethos, procedures and standards. Our national structure and investment enables us to continually develop, innovative, efficient and effective services for the benefit of Local Authorities and the children and young people for whom they are responsible.

### **Name and address of Registered Manager:**

**Name:** Jackie Miller

**Address:** 5a Wellington Road, London, E11 2AN

**Email:** info@ryancarefostering.com

### **Name and Address of Responsible Individual:**

**Name:** James Flanagan

**Address:** 5a Wellington Road, London, E11 2AN

**Email:** jflanagan@nfa.co.uk

All the activities of Ryancare Fostering are inspected and regulated by Ofsted:

**Registered Number:** SC060386

**Last inspection can be found at:** September 2018

Ofsted – Can be contacted at the follow address:

**Name:** Regulatory Inspector

**Address:** Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,  
Manchester, M1 2WD

**Telephone:** 0300 123 1231

**Email:** enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

# Section 04

## Equality & Diversity

The Agency is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity and promote LGBTQ+.

As an employer we are also committed to valuing equality and diversity within our workforce and to treating all employees and job applicants equally. Our goal is to ensure these commitments are embedded in our day to day working practices with all of our customers, colleagues and partners.

We provide equality of opportunity and do not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination. The Agency is responsive to any child's racial, cultural and linguistic background and belief systems, taking into account their age, understanding, ability, and any special needs they may have arising from physical or intellectual impairment.

The Agency is committed to equality of opportunity for employees, Foster Carers, children and young people and will strive to ensure no individual will be disadvantaged due to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason. We work with people from all walks of life and welcome you to the agency. Discriminatory behaviour will be robustly challenged and dealt with appropriately according to the circumstances.



# Section 05

## Safeguarding

Working Together to Safeguard Children:  
[www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk](http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk)

“Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part and have a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children”.

Ryancare Fostering prides itself on being child focused in all our work. We strive to be a reflective and learning organisation, taking on learning from Serious Case Reviews.

Staff are encouraged to “think the unthinkable” to be respectful yet challenging of carers, the LA and the organisation itself.

Our starting point is to listen to children as we believe that the greatest way to keep children safe is to listen to children and to take them seriously.

On placement all children are given a copy of the children's guide which provides them with information about who they can talk to, or how to make a complaint.

Foster carers are given clear guidance around safe carer, and along with the household safe carer, a child specific safe care is drawn up. Risk assessments are completed at the point of placement, and updated at least annually or following any significant incidence, to reflect changes. The purpose of the risk assessment is not just to highlight risk, but to identify what children, carers, staff and others can do to address those risk and work towards lowering them. Staff seek meetings with the Local Authority to discuss concerns and risk and share risk assessments.

The Registered Manager ensures the Quality Assurance Team is updated on all schedule 7 events and notifications. This allows for patterns to be explored and overview of learning to be drawn out. We strive to manage the situation, reduce the risk and learn from the situation.

Staff and carers receive mandatory training on safeguarding Team meetings are used to reflect on situations and team responses. We look to learn from research and incorporate it into our practice.

We have developed a number of champions for child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and County Lines to ensure that safeguarding remains high on all of our agendas.

Work is undertaken one to one or as part of a group. We have involved young people in the development of that package which is now being shared with foster carers in order to support the work.

## Section 06

# Agency and Management Structure

Ryancare Fostering part of the National Fostering Group and its agency structure. The National Fostering Group provides fostering across the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. There are clear defined structures of regional teams and partner agencies.

### Company Structure:

#### National Fostering Group Management structure:





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## About Ryancare Fostering

Ryancare is an independent fostering agency with a genuine family feel. We look after more than 25 children and work with over 20 foster carers in South, East and North London, around the M25 and Croydon and into Essex. Founded in 2002, we have been part of National Fostering Group since 2020.

Our relatively small size means that we're able to get to know all of our foster carers, foster children and staff individually. The whole team works together to support one another and help the young people and foster carers to grow and develop.

We offer a full range of fostering opportunities for approved foster carers, including short term, long-term, respite, plus fostering types that demand special skills, such as parent a child, children with disabilities and unaccompanied minors.

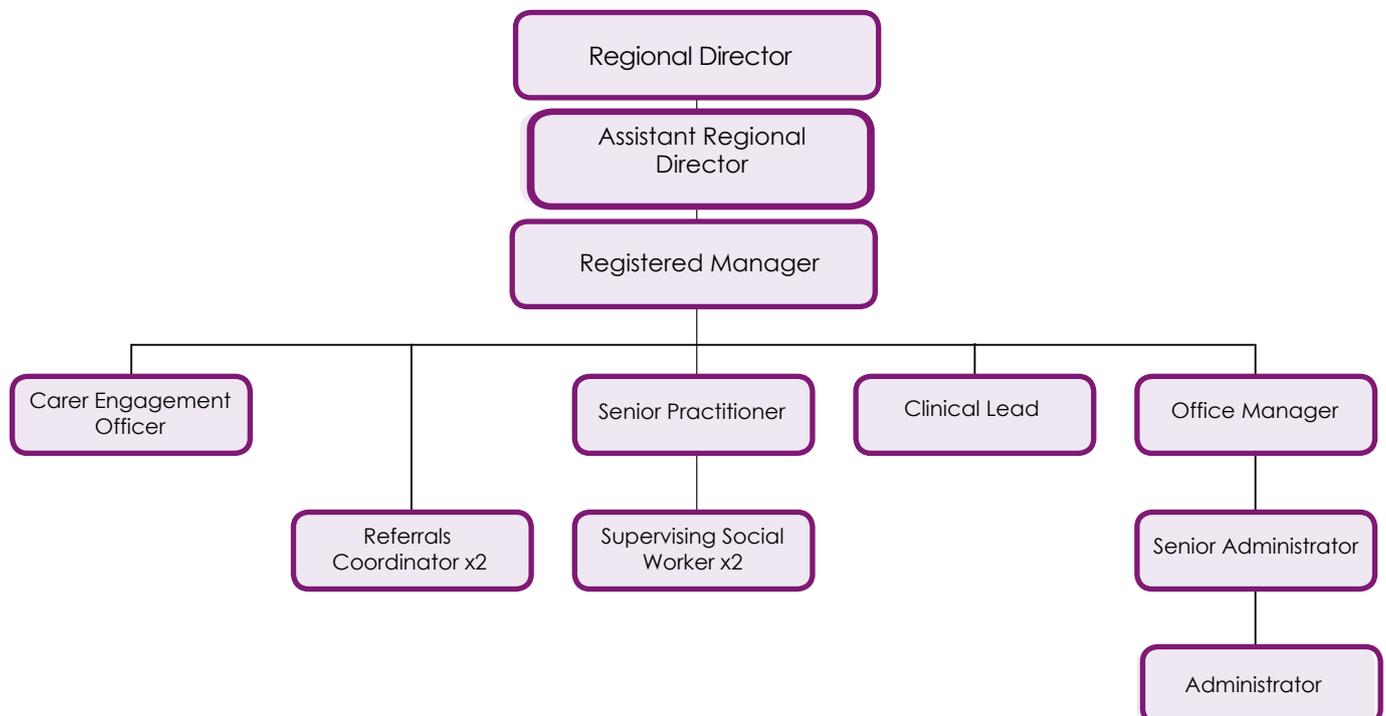
# Section 07

## Employees

The Senior Leadership Team includes the Director of Operations, Regional Directors and Registered Managers who are responsible for the day-to-day management and strategic direction of the organisation.

### Ryancare Fostering Structure

National Fostering Group senior management team have a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of fostering and social care. The Operations Director, Regional Director, Registered Manager and Social Work Team Managers are qualified social workers registered with HCPC. The management group meet on a regular basis and are responsible for all strategic and operational aspects of the agency. The Registered Manager is responsible for the overall operation of the agency and the development of services to foster carers, children and young people. The Registered Manager is a qualified social worker.





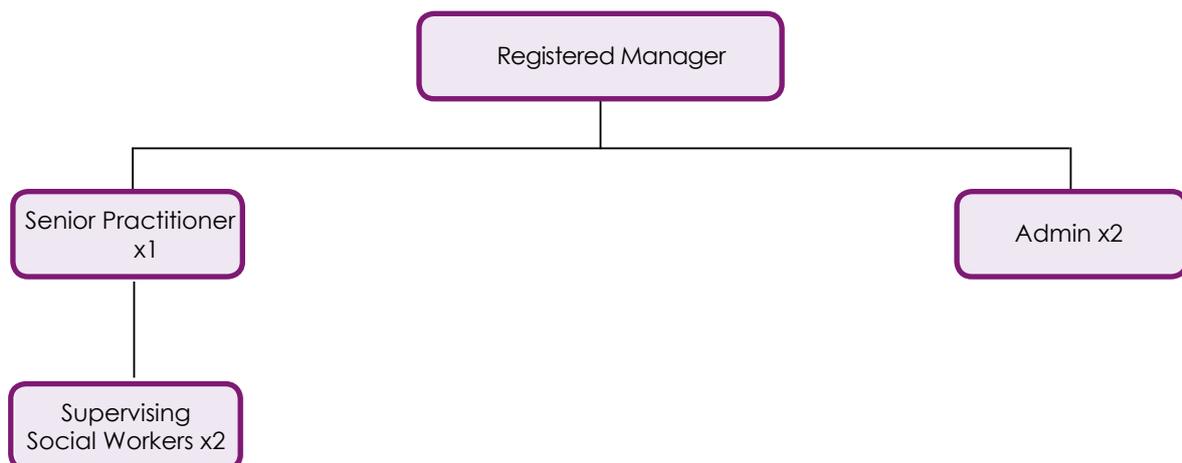
## The Social Work Team

Team Managers and Supervising Social Workers are all qualified, HCPC registered and very experienced social workers, having worked in a wide variety of statutory social work settings. The majority of the team have further post qualifying qualifications.

The team are responsible for visiting carer households regularly, attending meetings, spending time with children and young people in placement as appropriate and making recommendations for the annual foster carer review. Our team have access to clinical support as well as therapeutic group supervision.

All permanent members of staff have training development plans specific to their area of expertise, receive monthly supervision and annual appraisals. In addition staff have access to associate therapists to reflect on complex practice issues. Ryancare Fostering carries out background checks on all staff employed or commissioned by the company in accordance with requirements of the National Care Standards Act 2000 (National Minimum Fostering Standards).

All staff undertake mandatory training in safeguarding, equality and diversity and data protection.



## Section 08

# Complaints & Outcomes

The Agency has a comprehensive complaints procedure.

All children placed with Ryancare Fostering carers have the right to be safe, protected and listened to. When a child is placed with a foster carer they will be given written and verbal guidance (relative to their understanding) outlining the complaints procedure and ways to access support. This will include help lines, e.g. NSPCC, Childline and the telephone number of Ofsted. As well as statutory visits from the child's Social Worker, a Children's Rights Worker will see the children on their own on a regular basis. Ryancare Fostering always aims to give the best possible service but occasionally things can go wrong. When that happens we want to put them right and learn from our mistakes. National Fostering Group welcomes feedback of all kinds and maintains copies of all complaints.

Ryancare Fostering has a stringent anti-bullying policy. Foster carers are given advice and training on how to recognise signs of bullying and strategies are formulated on how to support the child. The complaints procedure is available to children, Foster Carers and all stakeholders and is reviewed annually to check its satisfactory operation. The review is undertaken to identify any patterns and to review the actions taken on individual complaints.

The Agency's complaints procedure places a strong emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level and an early stage. All complaints are investigated and recommendations for consideration, resolution and action are addressed. We take a 'lessons learned' approach from all complaints to improve our agency.

All complaints are dealt with in accordance with our policy and procedures and, where appropriate, an independent investigation is held.

The Agency, where appropriate, reflects upon and takes appropriate action to improve policies, practices and procedures in order to address complaints promptly and resolve the matters identified.

Dissatisfied complainants can be referred to a Stage 3 Independent Panel.

For a copy of our complaints procedure or to make a complaint, please contact the Registered Manager on 0208 989 4970

# Section 09

## Service Provision

The principles and purpose of the Agency with regard to service provision are:

- 
- To be fully compliant with the Fostering Service Regulations and other relevant statutes, laws and guidance
  - To ensure the delivery of safe, child-centred care with comprehensive and robust safeguarding systems
  - To recruit, train and assess a diverse Foster Carer population, enabling them to meet the complex and diverse needs of individual children referred
  - To ensure that all fostering assessments are undertaken by experienced, social work qualified staff, with active participation by the applicants. The agency to provide a buddy (experienced Foster Carer) to applicants
  - To ensure that all new fostering applicants complete Skills to Foster Training, as part of the assessment and approval process
  - To ensure that all of our Foster Carers are fully supported and trained in order to meet the needs of children we look after, including appropriate responses to their behaviour
  - To ensure that children and young people are matched to fostering families that can meet their individual needs, including, as far as is possible, their ethnic, cultural and religious need
  - To ensure that all of our Foster Carers are committed to meeting the objectives of a child's placement plan and care plan, including the promotion of appropriate contact
  - To promote educational participation and attainment for all children and young people in our care, in line with objectives identified by the Department for Education (DfE)
  - To maintain comprehensive and accurate records on the children and young people in our care, tracking progress and outcomes
  - To ensure that all of the information held by the Agency is managed in accordance with data protection guidance and legislation in order to promote safety whilst safeguarding dignity and privacy
  - To ensure that all our Foster Carers and their homes are fully compliant with health and safety risk assessment requirements
  - To provide all Foster Carers with regular supervision and support through an allocated Supervising Social Worker and to make clear that the frequency of visits, telephone and email contact can be increased, as necessary, in line with the needs of an individual child or young person in placement
  - To provide and maintain a 24 hour Out of Hours telephone support service, provided by a qualified social worker, and supported by an experienced, social work qualified manager, ensuring Foster Carers have access to appropriate advice and guidance at all times
  - To provide all Foster Carers with a Personal and Professional Development Plan and Learning and Development Record (PPDPLDR) tailored to meet their learning objectives and equip them to meet the needs of approved placement types
  - To provide a contact service
  - 10 nights paid respite (accrued pro rata)
  - Access to professional counselling
  - To provide all Foster Carers with access to Carer Support Groups for networking, information sharing, skills development and peer mentoring opportunities
  - To ensure that all of our Foster Carers are reviewed annually or earlier if required, and that the terms of approval are consistent with their assessed skills and ability
  - To deliver a high quality fostering service, open and responsive to feedback and complaints, and pro-active in reviewing service provision to meet changing sector requirements

# Section 10

## Fostering Panel

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The Fostering Panel is made up of members largely independent of the Agency. They come from different backgrounds such as Education, Health and Social Care. Members also include Foster Carers, an employee of the Agency and those who have had previous experience of being Looked After. The Fostering Panel has access to medical and legal advice.

The Fostering Panel provides an independent overview and makes recommendations to the Agency on matters that are brought to it. It is child-focussed and aims to ensure that any new foster carers that the Agency recruit will care well for children and keep them safe.

The Fostering Panel has important functions:

- To recommend to the Agency whether applicants are suitable to be approved as foster carers
- To recommend any changes to a foster carer's approval
- To discuss any serious concerns about a foster carer's practice
- To recommend termination of a foster carer's approval

The Fostering Panel members will consider the application to see if it meets the Agency's fostering requirements. The Panel will then make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Applicants are not required to meet with the Agency Decision Maker.

# Section 11

## Family Time

Ryancare recognises the need for children to have time with family members. Our commitment towards this is reflected in our Family time service.

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At Ryancare we believe that providing a safe and positive level of contact service for our children and young people is an important and indeed vital part of what we do.

For the looked after child Family time is very often an essential element for them. As well as taking stock of legal directives, advice from the Local Authority and working with a whole range of professionals including current and past foster carers, we also work with our children and young people and their birth families to ensure that they receive their required contact in a safe and imaginative setting.

We believe that positive, well planned Family time can help a child make sense of who they are, provide clues to their identity, build relationships and sometimes help heal or allow them to come to terms with the traumatic experiences they may have suffered in the past.

# Section 12

## Placement Types

The Agency is able to provide family placements through a number of specialist care services for a wide range of children, including those who are deemed difficult to place due to behavioural, disability or language needs.

Our focus is always on delivering the best possible outcomes for children whilst ensuring they stay in the mainstream of society. The Agency believes that with the right Foster Carers and the right 'match' all Children can benefit from the experience of a placement with a foster family.

### [Solo/Complex Needs and Enhanced Placements](#)

Every child is an individual with individual needs and in some circumstances these needs can be complex. The Agency is able to offer a number of placement packages to meet needs that are identified by the placing Local Authority as requiring additional support. In such circumstances a personalised package of support can be provided which will add additional resources to the placement and provide a greater likelihood of achieving successful outcomes for the child.

Additional support may come in the form of extra input from a qualified Social Worker or Support Worker or through guidance and consultation to the Foster Carer.

### [Specialist Placements](#)

#### [Step Down Placements or bridge to foster](#)

Our Step Down scheme represents an intensely resourced package of foster care designed to support young people who are ready for a transition from residential to foster care or who are experiencing a period of significant instability in their care placements.

Step Down enables local authorities to place young people in the confidence that they will receive the support required to achieve stability in foster care. The support 'steps down' over the duration of the placement ensuring that this becomes a viable long-term option for the young person and the placing Local Authority.





### Staying Put

The Agency is able to offer 'Staying Put' for the benefit of both young people and Local Authorities. Our Staying Put scheme provides the option for young people to remain with their Foster Carers past their 18th birthday in circumstances where this is deemed to be in the young adults' best interests and where this is a plan supported by the Local Authority. This can have many benefits for the young person and remove some of the pressure on local authorities in finding alternative living arrangements. Our Foster Carers are able to continue their support and provide valuable expertise, enabling young people to develop to a stage where they feel able to live more independently. Our Staying Put scheme is available for young adults over the age of eighteen.

Placements are reviewed regularly with a focus on supporting young adults to gain all the skills that they need to move on.

### Additional services

The Agency is committed to providing the highest quality of placements together with 'added value' support services for Local Authorities.

# Section 13

## Learning and Development

### Learning and Development for Foster Carers

Our Foster Carers and Employees have a vital role to play in providing support and security to many vulnerable children and young people. It is a challenging and rewarding job to help them manage the impact of abuse and family difficulties whilst beginning the transition to stability and independence. Effective and safe foster care requires knowledge, skill and dedication on the part of everyone concerned.

We provide a comprehensive range of learning and development opportunities to Foster Carers and Employees focussed on the promotion of safety, security and professional practice. Our Safeguarding training encompasses Basic Awareness, Safer Caring, Managing Allegations and Complaints, Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficked Children, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Domestic Violence and the Prevent Strategy.

### Foster Carer Training

We expect all of our Foster Carers to take part in learning and development activities. These include internal and external group training sessions facilitated by social workers and subject experts, online sessions accessible at home, support groups focussed on particular practice areas, and reading and learning conducted in the carer's own home.

We have a very clear expectation that all of our Foster Carers complete the learning activity outlined in their Personal and Professional Development Plan.





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## Learning and Development after Approval – Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

### Induction

After being approved, Foster Carers complete an induction. This is a one-to one session with the Supervising Social Worker.

### Employee Learning and Development

The Agency provides a monthly supervision and annual appraisal process for all employees. In addition we offer both internal and external training opportunities linked to specific roles. Our social work employees have a career development path that starts, if required, with our ASYE Programme and embraces Safeguarding, Practice Learning, Foster Carer Supervision and Assessment Skills. Other job roles also have access to role specific training.

### Employee Learning and Development

Ryancare Fostering welcome the placement of students in its region. Supervision Social Workers are supported to undertake training in becoming Practice Teachers. The whole team support the students on placement by offering them a wide range of learning opportunities.

# Section 14

## Management & Support

The key to successful foster placements is the management and support system available to our Foster Carers.

- All Foster Carers have an allocated, qualified Supervising Social Worker (SSW)
- All Foster Carers have access to our emergency out of hours support service, which is staffed by a qualified social worker, and supported by a qualified manager
- Agency Managers are accessible to Foster Carers, ensuring open communication and a prompt and responsive service
- We provide all of our Foster Carers with Fostering Network membership. This provides them with a range of independent support services, including legal services and insurance

### Supervision

Each Foster Carer has an allocated SSW, with a manageable caseload of fostering households, to ensure carers are provided with appropriate professional support and supervision.

It is the SSW's responsibility to manage and support the Foster Carer in the fostering task; ensuring the needs of children and young people are paramount, and each is afforded opportunities to progress and excel.

The SSW maintains telephone contact and undertakes professional supervision with the carers. The frequency of supervision may increase if the demands of a particular child or young person require it. Supervision is an opportunity to discuss the needs of children and young people placed, and consider how best to achieve progress and desired outcomes.

The SSW will provide professional advice, guidance and support to ensure Foster Carers are maintaining the high quality of care expected, and that placements are fully compliant with Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

Supervision visits must take place irrespective of whether there are children in placement, ensuring Agency and Foster Carers remain connected and fully apprised of all matters.

Supervision also provides the opportunity for reflection and learning, and enables the SSW to work collaboratively with the Foster Carer to assess skills, competence and abilities and formulate a tailored Personal & Professional Development Plan that will add to the Foster Carer's Learning and Development Record (PPDP).

Additional support is provided by our Support Workers that can include individual interventions with children according to assessed needs, or crisis support to Foster Carers.

### Emergency Support (On-Call Service)

All Foster Carers have access to our emergency out of hours support service which is staffed by a qualified social worker and supported by a qualified manager at all times. This is available outside office hours every evening, weekend and Bank Holiday, ensuring our Foster Carers have 24 hour support and advice at all times, and that safeguarding concerns and placement challenges are responded to in a timely manner.

### Foster Carer Reviews

All Foster Carers are reviewed each year, and the process is consistent with Fostering Service Regulations and National Minimum Standards. The review system incorporates a comprehensive range of consultation to ensure the views of everyone involved are incorporated, and the performance of Foster Carers is evaluated effectively. The annual review is an opportunity to appraise the carers' past year of fostering, to assess and review training needs, and set any specific objectives.



In addition, the annual review monitors the Foster Carer's satisfaction with the service they receive from the Agency. Any issues that are identified are fed back to Registered Managers.

When concerns arise about a carer's practice, or their ongoing commitment to professional development they will be addressed as part of the Foster Carer review, and can include a review of their approval at the Fostering Panel.

#### Unannounced Visits

In accordance with Fostering Service Regulations and National Minimum Standards, the Agency conducts unannounced visits a minimum of one Unannounced Visit to each foster home annually. We strive to complete 2, particularly where there have been significant concerns.

The purpose of the visits is to assess the home circumstances and care provided, ensuring the high standards that the Agency requires are maintained at all times.

#### Support Groups

Regular support groups are held across the Agency, in locations accessible to Foster Carers. The groups are led and facilitated by SSWs, with Foster Carers actively contributing to the agenda and participating in the groups.

These groups provide an opportunity for carers to network with one another, to share skills and experiences, and to provide peer support. In addition, it enables the Agency to stay closely connected to carers and keep them informed of Agency developments, the changing world of foster care, changes in fostering legislation, new research and best practice.

#### Foster Carer Quality Group Consultation

Foster Carer Quality Group provide an arena for Foster Carers to comment on Agency policy, practice, service delivery and service development. They also promote the sharing of ideas on best practice. Regional Foster Carer Representatives meet several times a year with Senior Agency Managers.

#### Independent Support

Foster Carers receive support from various professionals including independent experts. All Foster Carers are registered members of Fostering Network who provide support to Foster Carer households. This includes high quality specialist support, advice and information, legal expenses insurance, and rewards for Foster Carers with access to a huge range of discounts.

The Agency also commissions – an independent, advocacy support service to Foster Carers, provided on a needs led basis. This provides our carers with professional, independent support during difficult situations, including allegations.

The service provides a 24 hour response and an allocated Independent Advisor who provides impartial, objective information, enabling carers to make informed decisions when in difficult or stressful circumstances.

#### Policies & Procedures

The Agency has a comprehensive and easy to understand Foster Carer Handbook. This is accessible online to all of our approved Foster Carers, along with additional resource material, to guide and aid them in the fostering task. The Handbook contains information on fostering legislation, guidance, finance, access to records, safeguarding, health and safety matters, health, education, managing behaviours and a plethora of other subjects relevant to the fostering task.

# Section 15

## Contact Details for Other Agencies

### Children's Commissioner

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner  
Office of Children's Commissioner for England,  
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3BT

T: 020 7783 8330

E:

[Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Freephone for children and young people

T: 0800 5288330

### Voice

Voice is a national children's charity that empowers children and young people in care and in need, and campaigns for change to improve their lives.

320 City Road, London, EC1V 2NZ

T: 020 7833 5792

[www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

E: [info@voiceyp.org](mailto:info@voiceyp.org)

### Ofsted

All the activities of National Fostering Group are inspected and regulated by Ofsted who can be contacted at the following address:

Regulatory Inspector, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### Youth Advocacy Services

Provides independent and confidential social and legal advice, information and advocates

0800616101

[help@nys.net](mailto:help@nys.net)

### A National Voice

Run for and by young people who are or have been in care in England.

0161 2375577

[www.anationalvoice.org](http://www.anationalvoice.org)

### ChildLine

A free helpline for children to talk about any problems.

08001111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

# Section 16

## Professional Membership

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### [The Fostering Network](#)

The Ryancare Fostering has a corporate membership with The Fostering Network which is the UK's leading charity for everyone involved in fostering. This means that they are uniquely placed to bring people and organisations together to improve the lives of children in foster care.

The Fostering Network works to raise the profile of foster care through lobbying and campaigning for improvements in foster care at UK, national and local level.

### [NAFP – National Association of Fostering Providers](#)

Ryancare are proud members of NAFP who campaign on behalf of Independent Fostering Providers.

# Section 17 Accredited Standards

## Leading Improvements for Looked After Children

This innovative and ground-breaking inspection body was set up to ensure that young people who have experienced care can influence and shape accommodation services for looked after children. Inspectors are trained young adults and young people who inspect a fostering service or care home on standards that the young people themselves, as an organisation, have devised. Services that meet an agreed criterion will be awarded the LILAC kite mark for good practice. A particular emphasis agreed by LILAC is on the participation and engagement of young people in any given service. RyanCare Fostering is proud to have achieved the LILAC award.



## Investors in People

The National Fostering Group is recognised as an Investor in People and has held the Award since 2004. In October 2013 the National Fostering Group achieved the Investors in People Gold Award. National Fostering Group will continue to be an investor in people.







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