



# Statement of Purpose

NFA Lowestoft: East

URN: SC038843

September 2021





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# Introduction to the Fostering Provider

This Statement of Purpose for NFA has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance contained in the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (amended 2013).

This Statement of Purpose is provided to and made available to employees, carers, local authorities, children and young people in placement and to the general public on request. It is reviewed and agreed annually by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager. It is submitted on review to Ofsted, and is published on the NFA website.

NFA (Lowestoft) provides a service to Children and Young People across the East of England. The Area Manager reports to the Operations Manager. Qualified Social Workers are widely placed in order to provide quality support and supervision to foster carers at a local level, and to manage carer growth within their locality.

Overview of contractual and regulatory compliance in relation to local service is the responsibility of the Regional Management Teams, in consultation with the Registered Manager.

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

Managing Director - Fostering Division  
National Fostering Group  
Outcomes First Group  
Atria  
Spa Road  
Bolton  
BL1 4AG  
T: 01204 522 667  
E: info@nfa.co.uk

## **Name and Address of Registered Manager**

Ann McKendrick  
Registered Manager  
National Fostering Agency  
2 Quay View Business Park  
Barnards Way  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 2HD  
E: info@nfa.co.uk

## **Name and Address of Inspection Body –**

### **Ofsted**

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

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

### **General Enquiries**

0300 123 1231

### **About Concerns**

0300 123 4666

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



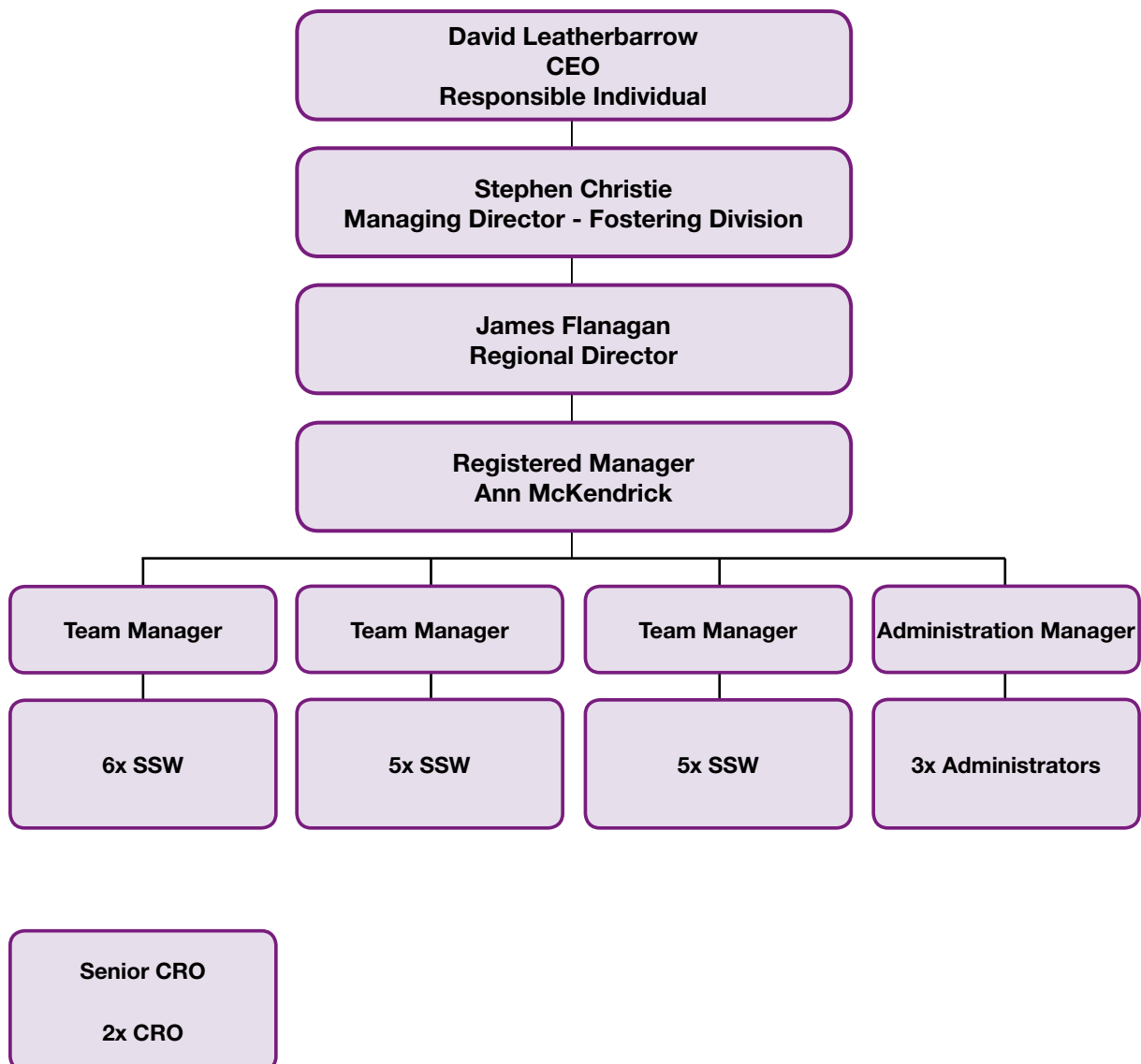
# Agency Structure

## Company Structure

The NFAG provides fostering services across the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland through a clearly defined structure of Regional Teams and Partner Agencies. The Chief Executive Officer is the responsible individual for all Registered Offices and the Director of Quality Assurance is the Agency Decision Maker for the Group.

Support services including Training, Human Resources, Finance, and Quality Assurance are centrally provided.

The Senior Management Team comprises of the Chief Executive Officer, Directors of Finance, Marketing, Operations, Quality and Human Resources, alongside three Operational Managers and Regional Managers.





# Vision 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.



## Aims and Objectives

The National Fostering Agency strives to attain leadership status across the UK by delivering, with professional integrity, high standards of quality care for the children placed with our foster carers.

We recognise the financial constraints faced by our customer authorities and strive to provide cost effective solutions through the provision of creative care packages for young people.

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 Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Children's Act 1989, guidance and regulations Volume 4: fostering services (referred to as statutory guidance) 2011
- The Children's Act 2004
- The Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- National Standards for Foster Care and Family Placements Services

This Statement of Purpose is produced in accordance with Fostering Services and Regulations and includes:

- A statement of aims and objectives of the fostering service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by NFA Fostering Services

The agency is inspected on a regular basis by OFSTED and copies of inspection reports are available from OFSTED. The messages from Every Child Matters are also incorporated into agency delivery and planning of services and monitoring of performance.

### **The primary 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**

In pursuit of its stated aims and objectives the agency will employ policies, practices, procedures which 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/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 well being, 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 and 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 for children, carers and staff and ensure access to such records, in line with legislation

## Commitment to Equality and Diversity

NFA recognise the diverse society and communities in which we all live and work. We embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. We aim to recruit people from all backgrounds to reflect the demographics of the regions we cover.

NFA's Equal Opportunities Policy applies to staff, foster carers and young people. Training is mandatory for all staff and carers to assist them to understand and value diversity. We want all children and young people in our placements, our foster carers and employees to feel valued and treated equally and fairly. Our goal is to ensure our values are embedded in our day to day working practices with all our stakeholders and service users.

The service considers the needs of all young people referred in the areas of race, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, ability and geographic origin, and will endeavour to promote each young person's sense of identity through appropriately matched placements, and direct work in relation to a young person's cultural background.

There is a commitment to challenging individuals or groups who discriminate against any of our young people in anyway and diversity is celebrated through daily living experiences and educational programmes.





# The Voice of the Child

## Children & Young People's Rights

NFA supports UNICEF's mission is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is guided in doing this by the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Participation and Consultation

The Senior Management Team (SMT) within the NFA is committed to ensuring the involvement of service users, carers, staff and stakeholders when gathering information to help shape strategy, policy and procedures of the Agency, and to ensuring that quality standards, achieve ongoing and sustainable improvement through continuous review.

We expect supervising social workers to see each child on a regular basis, to ascertain their views about their care.

In our region we hold a number of events throughout the year for children and for carers to give them the opportunity to tell us about the services we provide. We welcome their feedback and use it to bring about improvements to our service.

## VOX

The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are vital to the development of services and NFA is committed to the involvement of the child and young person in all aspect of service design and delivery. To this end, NFA organise Children and Young Persons consultation groups on a regional basis. These groups run under the title of VOX. Alongside these events consultation through questionnaires, on line surveys, local activities and feedback forms for carers' annual reviews and LAC reviews all feed into service developments.

Children and young people have access to a dedicated email address, and are invited to use this in relation to any aspect of their care whilst in placement. All children and young people receive a copy of their own magazine "Kidslines" or "Teenlines" filled with articles from children and young people and other interesting news.

## We Continue to Learn from Feedback Received

### Child's Feedback

- All moved into the new flat! I am so blessed and lucky to have such incredible people in my life. I cannot thank you enough for today!
- You have given me so much over these 5 years.
- I have a bright and promising future because of the support you both gave me and I am eternally grateful!
- I love you and the gang so much!

### Parent's Feedback

- Hi I don't know if you remember me but I'm sure you'll remember my son. I saw your name on Facebook and just wanted you to know how grateful I am for what you have done for me and my family. He has done a complete turnaround.
- He completed his home tutoring, done his GCSE's and is now doing his 2nd year at college doing professional cooking. He passed his driving test last month as well. I know that without your input and commitment we wouldn't be where we are today and want to thank you for that.
- We are a happy family now.

### Foster Carer Feedback

- Fostering has become a way of life for us now, and we actually feel privileged to be engaged in such important work.
- We have no doubt that our lives, and those of our children and young people are enriched by this process.

### Local Authority Social Worker Feedback

- I want to record that although we have only worked together for a short time, that I have been very impressed by how much you care for this little girl.
- The strength of your conviction for this little girl is very clear. The wish to make her childhood safe and secure is very evident and this will assist her greatly.
- I want to thank you for all that you offer to her
- I also want to express my thanks for your hospitality during our meetings. The sense of humour demonstrated between you all is fantastic and a huge positive for her.



# Services and Facilities

## Service Provision

NFA provides a range of types of placements as defined by the local authorities which commission our services. These include:

- Emergency Placements provided at short notice, including out of hours
- Bridging Placements are a short term flexible placement, focussing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child into and from the placement
- Short Term Placements can provide care for a few days, weeks or months while plans are being made for the child's long term future
- Long Term Placements are where foster carers provide continuing care for a child up to and into adult independence
- Permanence where the care plan for the child is to remain with that carer until adulthood
- Sibling Placements are placements where sibling are either placed together or separately with us facilitating contact between siblings
- Solo Placements are placements for children and young people who are unable to be placed alongside other children due to their very complex needs and/or challenging behaviour
- Respite breaks are where foster carers provide a break for parents and additional support where their own support networks are lacking, or can be provided to other foster carers as a way of supporting complex needs placements. This can be an overnight stay or a couple of weeks
- Unaccompanied Children are placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Support packages include immigration; supporting religious, language and cultural needs; integration with community and faith groups
- Specialist Fostering provides placements to children who have complex needs and would benefit from a more specialist service or a solo placement with an experienced carer. These usually include enhanced packages of support or additionally purchased services

- Parent and Child arrangements provide a safe and supportive family based environment where parenting skills are able to be modelled, observed and assessed in line with the placement agreement. Some placements provide a formal parenting assessment completed by a qualified Social Worker which is commissioned to inform the care plan of the Local Authority
- Remand placements where a child is ordered by a court to reside with a foster carer and fulfil the requirements ordered by the court

## Foster Carers

The National Fostering Agency is committed to delivering to the Frameworks to which we are contracted. Local recruitment strategy is shaped by Service Plans produced by the Local Authorities in line with their Sufficiency Duty.

### Recruitment

The skills required of foster carers able to deliver to these plans are varied and wide-ranging; this is reflected in the diversity of people who become NFA carers. The agency recruits individuals and families from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and from all parts of the community, who can bring a variety of experiences to the fostering task and aid good matching.

### Application Process

The NFA website provides potential carers with information and real life case examples to help them make informed choices about fostering for this agency. Enquiries can be made online, by telephone or dedicated text. All applicants will be contacted initially by a Carer Engagement Officer who will discuss their interest, arrange to send out an information pack and if appropriate arrange an initial visit.

### Initial Visits

All Initial Visits are undertaken by a local qualified Social Worker in the prospective carer's home. Accurate and realistic information about the fostering task needs of children in the local area and support provided by the agency is shared. The Social Worker will consider with

the potential applicant through discussion their skills and motivation, alongside practical requirements to foster.

### **Transferring Carers**

The NFA recognises that carers have choices and that in some instances decisions are made to move between approving agencies. In these circumstances the Fostering Network Protocols are followed, and the agency work closely with responsible Local Authorities to ensure that the care experiences of any children in placement are not detrimentally affected by the transfer.

### **Assessment of Prospective Carers**

All assessments are conducted by qualified, registered Social Workers in accordance with the Fostering Regulations 2011 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (miscellaneous amendments) Regulations 2013.

#### **All candidates must:**

- Complete a standard application form, providing comprehensive details about themselves and members of their household
- Give agreement for the required statutory checks to be undertaken
- Agree to undertake a medical with their GP, the results of which are viewed by our medical advisor prior to making a recommendation regarding fitness to foster
- Provide the names of three referees who can provide an independent view of the applicant's abilities and suitability of the household
- Provide details of any ex-partners with whom they have jointly parented a child unless there are exceptional circumstances to indicate this is inappropriate. The agency is required to interview any ex-partners as part of the assessment process
- Provide details of all children/adult children, of the applicants who will need to be interviewed through the assessment
- Give their agreement to an employer's reference being sought by the agency

Should sufficient concern be raised by any of these enquiries then the decision not to proceed with

the assessment may be reached. In such cases appropriate manager will write to the applicants outlining the reasons for this decision and providing detail of the agency's complaints procedure.

As part of the assessment process applicants are required to attend a 3 day Skills to Foster Training programme which will inform their preparation to foster. During this time they will begin to complete a Training Standards Portfolio which they should complete in their first year of fostering.

#### **In addition evidence based written report covers:**

- The applicants motivation to be a foster carer
- Their capabilities and individual skills
- The feelings, views and involvement of all household members, including applicant's children who may live away from the home
- Any existing demands made on the applicant
- Recommendations in terms of matching alongside the family

#### **Approval**

Following completion of all statutory enquiries, all assessments are considered by a properly constituted and independent Panel, which makes recommendations to the agency regarding the suitability of the applicant to be a foster carer. This may include any additional terms that the panel considers should apply. The agency decision maker takes full account of the panel's recommendations when reaching decisions. Prospective carers are asked to attend the panel alongside their assessing Social Worker. Should the agency not recommend approval, the applicant will be written to outlining reasons for this decision and provided with information regarding their right to appeal, or to access the Independent Review Mechanism.

All successful applicants are provided with a Foster Carer Agreement, confirming their appointment as an agency carer. It gives details about their terms of approval, and outlines expectations of both carer and agency.

Foster carers are provided with a comprehensive fostering handbook which contains information and procedures in all aspects of the fostering task. It is updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document, and is also available online via access to a secure carer area provided upon approval.

At this stage they are also provided with access to a full training programme in order to begin building on their Training Standards Profile and continue their development as carers.

### **Review and Terminations of Approval**

The Agency reviews carer approval annually, or following a significant event or change within the household to ensure that the carer continues to be suitable in line with statutory requirements and that approval reflects their ongoing development. The review is usually conducted in the carer's home and recommendation is then overseen by an independent manager. The agency may only propose to amend a foster carers terms of approval following a review in accordance with Regulation 28(2) of the Fostering Services Regulations amended 2013. Reviews are presented to panel following the first year of fostering and any significant event including complaints or allegations. Applicants are invited to attend. Where a change of approval is proposed the agency must issue a 'qualifying determination' and provide details of the applicants right to appeal or access the IRM.

For all reviews a full report will be prepared by the agency Social Worker and contributions from the child's Social Worker and children placed will be sought. These will be shared with the carer.

The review provides an opportunity for the agency and carer to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. It takes account of:

- Recommendations of the previous review
- Enquiries made and information obtained by the agency
- Outcomes for children placed in this household since the last review
- Any significant changes in the household including to accommodation

- Training undertaken by the carer and support given
- The views of the Carer and all members of the household including children who are/have been placed during this period
- The views of placing authorities
- Updates on all statutory checks
- Annual updates on Health and Safety checks
- Any concerns, complaints or compliments raised by the carers in relation to the agency

The review recommendation will then be presented to the Agency Decision Maker by the relevant independent manager for approval. The carer will then receive confirmation of their re approval in writing.

### **Referrals and Matching**

On receipt of a referral from a local authority, NFA referral coordinators will consider the needs of the child and propose a match with carers available, based on:

- Their experience, knowledge and skills
- Their location and the distance from the foster home to the child's school and community
- Any other children in the placement
- The foster carer's own children and other family members
- The child's individual matching requirements including cultural needs and wishes

The match is made in consultation with experienced social work staff. All information known about the child from the referral will be shared with the potential carers. The referrals coordinator will present potential matches, identifying how the carers can meet the needs of the child. If gaps in their ability to meet the child's needs are identified, additional support or services will be offered. A profile of the carers setting out details of the family, their home and their experience and training can be forwarded to the local authority for use by the child's social worker to introduce the child to the carers. The carers' form F and most recent annual review report together with any other information requested is forwarded to the local authority. A risk assessment is completed on the making of a placement.

## Support Services

In recognition of the needs presented by each child, NFA has developed and continues to develop additional support to foster carers and children and young people. Whilst not an exhaustive list the following types of services have been developed and are available:

- Carer buddies are foster carers identified to support newly approved foster carers for the first year of their fostering

## Safeguarding

Learning from the experiences of children in care over past decades, NFA believes that the greatest means of keeping children safe is to instil across the whole organisation a commitment to listen to children and take seriously what they say.

On placement all children are given a copy of the Children's Guide, written in consultation with children placed with NFA. The Children's Guide includes a detailed section on protecting children and young people, outlining the different categories and signs of harm, and who a child can contact.

Foster carers are given very clear guidance about safe caring. This is reinforced through mandatory training on safe caring and through ensuring all carers have a safe caring policy which they can share with the child on placement, and which is adapted at the start of each placement, depending on the needs of the child.

Safeguarding and the welfare of children is championed at the highest level, by the Chief Executive Officer, who chairs the agency Safeguarding Committee. This Committee has been formed to ensure that safeguarding is integral to all aspects of the organisation and that allegations are dealt with effectively. It analyses audits which have been undertaken, and ensures that learning from incidences which have occurred is used to improve practice. The Committee provides regular reports to the Board.

We recognise that a policy does not in itself lead to children in placements being protected; rather it is how it is implemented, a comprehensive understanding of child protection, and provision of specific training that brings foster carers and Supervising Social Workers closer to safeguarding children. To underpin our policy

and our commitment to providing placements for children where they will be happy and safe, and able to develop to their full potential, our recruitment, training and assessment of carers and staff focuses strongly on strengthening the safeguarding of children. Safer Recruitment Guidelines are observed in the recruitment of all staff working for the organisation, whilst extensive checks are undertaken on carers, in a context of a robust culture of exploring prospective carers' histories and motivation. Each Registered Manager works closely with LSCBs in their area to ensure that NFA policy aligns itself to local procedure and that these are followed in the first instance.

At the point of placement, supervising social workers are responsible for coordinating the completion of a risk assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment

is not merely to identify risks, but to identify what steps can be put in place to minimise the risk and manage these. Risk assessments are updated at least annually and at any point when information comes to light which would require a fresh assessment. The risk assessment extends to managing risk in relation to a child going missing, and consults with the appropriate LADO regarding actions in the absence of these where there is a safeguarding concern.

Clear procedures are in place in relation to accidents and critical incidents, behaviour management when physical intervention may be required, dealing with complaints allegations and standards of care concerns. The registered manager provides regular reports to the responsible individual regarding all such concerns, including their outcome and the length of time taken to resolve the issue. Following complaints, allegations and standards of care, carers are reviewed and the review is presented to panel.

When it is necessary and appropriate, NFA staff take the initiative to request that LAs convene strategy or professionals meetings when there is concern about the safety of a child/young person e.g. young person regularly going missing.

Foster carers and SSWs receive mandatory training on recognising the signs of abuse, understanding the impact of abuse on the children they will be looking after and knowing what to do in the event of suspecting that a child is suffering harm. Managers undertake

mandatory online training in Safer Recruitment, provided by the NSPCC.

NFA is committed to increasing and updating knowledge of how to safeguard children, through the ongoing development of training informed by changing trends and needs. We regularly include articles in the magazines distributed to all children in our placements about what to do if they are being bullied or how to keep safe when using the Internet. Other courses with direct relevance to child protection include Safer Caring, sexual abuse (2 days), parent and child training, drugs and alcohol.

Concerns about standards of care issues or allegations against carers are conducted using the clear policy and procedures set out. The Registered Manager oversees all cases where carers' conduct is being investigated and ensures that referrals are made to the appropriate LADO based on the carers' location.

Carers subject to allegations of abuse or standards of care have access through Foster Talk to independent support and advice, including legal assistance.

Following investigation, all cases are brought to panel in the form of a carer review, with a recommendation for the future management of the foster carer. Recommendations regarding referrals to the DBS barring list are considered by the Safeguarding Committee and Responsible person.

Supervision of both staff and foster carers has child protection as a key element. Clear procedures are in place for escalating concerns to senior managers and through 24/7 cover, a timely response to concerns of children being at risk are addressed.

Complaints, concerns and standards of care are regularly monitored.

## Complaints and Compliments

The National Fostering Agency Complaints Procedure deals equitably and speedily with any complaint made by Foster Carers, Social Workers or Children.

### Complaints by Foster Carers

The National Fostering Agency recommends that any complaint made by a Foster Carer should first be discussed with their Supervising Social Worker. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage then a meeting will be arranged between the Foster Carer and the Team Manager to resolve any concerns.

If the foster Carer is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to their Registered Manager for investigation, whose contact details are:

#### Ann McKendrick

Registered Manager  
National Fostering Agency  
2 Quay View Business Park  
Barnards Way  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 2H

The Registered Manager will acknowledge this complaint in writing within seven days and the investigation will be completed within 21 days or longer if appropriate.

If your complaint is about the Registered Manager please contact the Managing Director whose contact details are:

Managing Director - Fostering Division  
National Fostering Group  
Outcomes First Group  
Atria  
Spa Road  
Bolton  
BL1 4AG  
T: 01204 522 667

### **Complaints by Children, Parents, Social Workers and other Professionals**

The Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carer will be informed immediately of any complaint made by a Young Person or a Parent or someone involved with the child or young person. In the first instance the complainant is encouraged to resolve the matter directly with the Foster Carer.

The Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker and the Young Person's Social Worker can provide support in this task and will hold a stability meeting.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to The National Fostering Agency's Operations Director for investigation. The Operations Director will acknowledge this complaint in writing within seven days and the investigation will be completed within 21 days or longer if appropriate.

The National Fostering Agency's Registered Manager will inform all parties of the outcome of the investigation in writing following its completion. Please refer to the NFA Complaints Policy for more information.

Compliments are as important as complaints in ensuring we continue to learn and improve. Compliments about individuals or services are shared widely across the agency.



# NFA as a Learning Environment

A commitment to learning and development at all levels of the agency is demonstrated through:

- Carers identifying their future learning needs. This is used to direct them to the range of face to face courses provided throughout the year, elearning courses, and specialist courses if required. Carers are also encouraged to take advantage of courses offered by the local authority whose children are placed with them. They also have access to seminars delivered by supervising social workers at support groups or on a one to one basis
- Staff complete their learning and development plans as part of their annual appraisals. Individual learning needs are tailored toward career development alongside development of 'areas of special interest' which add value to the local service delivered and provide Regional teams with 'champions'. This informs the regional management team of what training needs to be commissioned. Staff also have access to a wide range of elearning courses. Staff are encouraged to undertake training offered by local safeguarding boards in the locality where they are working. Team managers benefit from a blended learning programme called Aspire, Achieve, Advance – developing our team managers to meet our future challenges. Managers are also given the opportunity to achieve an ILM in management
- NFA welcomes the placement of students in its regions. Supervising social workers are supported to undertake training in becoming Practice Teachers. Teams support students by offering them a wide range of learning experiences
- NFA has made a commitment to support and supervise AYSE workers in their first year of practice to complete their portfolio where the region can accommodate them. Their supervisors and AYSE workers share experiences and learning through a support group





# Finance

## Fees

### Agency fees

The Agency operates within a number of Framework Contracts for Independent Fostering agencies. Fees agreed within each framework for different types of placement are transparent and inclusive. The Agency Fee Schedule incorporates discounts for long-term and sibling placements in some instances where agreed.

Any additional services required in order to meet a child's particular needs and circumstances, over and above those outlined in a contract, are negotiated and agreed with the responsible authority at the point of placement or at subsequent reviews, and confirmed through the issuing of an Individual Placement Agreement by the responsible Local Authority. This could include, for example, additional educational support, specialised equipment for a child with disabilities and other exceptional or major expenses as well as ongoing therapeutic input from one of the professionals working with the agency.

### Carers' Fees

The financial remuneration offered to agency carers reflects the demands of the task and quality of service carers are expected to offer. Out of their fee, carers are expected to meet the routine cost of looking after a child. Further details are available on request and are always included with the foster carer's agreement.

### A Statement of the Agency's Financial Position

The agency's income is generated entirely by fees paid by the local authorities for placements with agency carers for looked after children. These fees are detailed in the agency's Schedule of Fees.

The agency's expenditure comprises fees to foster carers, staff salaries and the expenses associated with the running of the service. There is also a commitment to improving and enhancing services to carers and children. The agency's finances are subject to annual audits.



# Insurance

The National Fostering Agency has an insurance package which is fully comprehensive and covers all the agency's activities and legal obligations. It is based on Fostering Network standards and covers both carers and the agency, as follows:

- Personal and Public Liabilities  
(indemnity £20 million)
- Employer's Liability Insurance  
(indemnity limit of £20 million)
- Professional Indemnity  
(indemnity limit £5 million)
- Abuse & Molestation  
(indemnity limit of £5 million)
- Foster Carer's Public Liability, All Risks, Thefts and Malicious Damage insurance whilst a child is in placement, excluding damage to motor vehicles and property already insured  
(limit £100,000 for one occurrence)
- Medical Malpractice  
(indemnity limit of £5 million)

The Foster Carer's insurance is provided by SSCP Spring TopCo Ltn and subsidiaries via Bollington Insurance Brokers Ltd. Premiums are paid by the agency although carers are required to have their own household contents insurance and are advised about the information they need to pass on to their insurers about their carer role. However, the agency will meet any excess on the individual carer's household contents policy in the event of a claim arising from the child's circumstances, needs or actions except where it is agreed otherwise.



## Practice Amendments in Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid 19)

During 2020, elements of National Fostering Agency East's day to day practices were reviewed in response to the Global Coronavirus Pandemic. Whilst the pandemic caused the agency to reflect and adapt to new ways of working, the agency continued to provide the full range of services and maintain appropriate staffing levels.

From 18th March-31st June 2020, National Fostering Agency East's office premises were not staffed daily; one administration staff member visited the building twice weekly to undertake housekeeping. During this period all other members of National Fostering Agency East's staff team worked predominantly remotely from home. National Fostering Agency East remained fully functional throughout the office premises closure period, continuing to meet both Regulatory requirements and agency policy and procedures.

Some agency practices were amended where necessary in response to the Government's requirements, particularly in the areas relating to travel and social distancing.

The following visits, meetings, groups and forums were all enabled to take place virtually, via video conferencing facilities:

- Staff team meetings, supervision, attendance at meetings, and learning opportunities
- Foster Carer supervision, Annual Foster Reviews, attendance at meetings, and learning opportunities
- Fostered children & young people Observation Visits, Bedroom Checks, and Child Seen Alone visits
- Discussion, consultation, and engagement activities with foster carers, children & young people
- Foster Carer support groups
- Meetings of National Fostering Agency East Panel
- Initial Visits to foster carer enquiries
- Assessment visits to foster carer applicants

Visits to foster homes to meet with foster parents, members of their household, and fostered children were consistently undertaken in person where this was considered to be required e.g. for the purposes of safeguarding children and critical placement support. The short-term amendments stipulated in the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 - Amendment of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, were not extensively utilised by National Fostering Agency East during the period that they were available. This was with the exception of allowing self-declaration for foster caring applicants in relation to their own health assessments, but with the requirement to have full health assessments as soon as practically possible following this.

The Covid 19 restrictions enabled us to 'trial' new ways of working and assess the potential benefits for the agency as a whole, its staff, foster carers, and young people. Our aim, as always, is to provide the highest quality of support and supervision to our staff and foster carers and to connect in a meaningful way with our young people to ensure they remain happy, safe, and thriving in our care. We recognise that social work practice is complex and requires flexibility, so rather than being prescriptive, we have empowered our staff to use their professional judgement and deliver a bespoke approach which is tailored to the individual needs of foster carers, children and young people and staff, whilst still setting out a minimum standard. Therefore, from 1st July some of the practice amendments implemented between 18th March-31st June 2020 have remained:

Foster Carer Supervision - will remain monthly and can be completed in person or via video conference call, with a minimum of four supervisions annually being in person

- Fostered children & young people Observation Visits, Bedroom Checks, and Child Seen Alone Visits will take place three-monthly, with a minimum of six-monthly in person
- Foster Carer support group taking place in person or via video conferencing
- Initial Visits to foster carer enquiries taking place in person or via video conferencing

- Assessment visits to foster carer applications taking place via a combination of in person and video conferencing
- Meetings of Child Care Bureau's Foster Panel taking place in person or via video conferencing
- Discussion, consultation, and engagement activities with foster carers and children & young people taking place in person or via video conferencing

Staff team meetings, supervision, attendance at meetings, and learning opportunities taking place in person or via video conferencing



# Accredited Standards

## Leading Improvements for Looked After Children

NFA has successfully achieved LILAC – ‘Leading Improvements for Looked after Children’, with the key objective of developing a quality framework for involvement policy and practice targeting young people in care. The young people will make use of this framework to carry out assessments of local authority or agency services.



## Investors in People

The National Fostering Agency is recognised as an Investor in People and has held the Award since 2004. In September 2016 the NFA achieved the Investors in People Gold Award. NFA will continue to be an investor in people.





# Professional Membership

## **CoramBAAF (Southern England)**

CoramBAAF promotes the highest standards of child-centered policies and services. It influences policy-makers, helps find new families for children and supports professions, adoptive parents and foster carers. Its activities include:

- Finding permanent and loving families for hundreds of children every year
- Publications for social workers, adoptive parents, foster carers, children, adopted adults, students and academics
- Training, seminars and conference tackle the issues facing practitioners today
- Campaigning nationally and locally for changes to policy and practice to improve the lives of children in the care system
- Guidance and advice about all aspects of adoption and fostering

The NFA has a corporate membership with CoramBAAF.

Address:

41 Brunswick Square,  
London  
WC1N 1AZ

T: 020 7520 0300

## **The Fostering Network**

The Fostering Network 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.

The NFA has a corporate membership with the Fostering Network.

87 Blackfriars Road  
London  
SE1 8HA

T: 020 7620 6400 or 0800 040 7675

E: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net)

## **NWG**

NWG is a network tackling child sexual exploitation they also provide high quality training that our staff members attend.

Each staff member has a membership to NWG (purchased by NFA) so that they may receive advice and support on individual cases.

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

T: 01332 585371



# Contact Details

## Essential Addresses and Contact Details

### 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 NFA 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)

By providing carefully matched, and professionally trained and supported foster carers, the National Fostering Agency provides each individual child placed with a responsive, effective and quality service.



**NFA Lowestoft: East  
Statement of Purpose September 2021**

**National Fostering Agency | 2 Quay View Business Park | Barnards Way | Lowestoft | NR32 2HD**