



Statement of Purpose

NFA Scotland
Jan 2024

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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose for

National Fostering Agency Scotland

NFA is an independent fostering agency which works nationwide across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Statement of Purpose (SoP) for NFA (Scotland) Limited has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislations:

- National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement 2005
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The Regulation of Care Act 2001
- Looked after Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the New Health and Social Care Standards.

The SoP outlines the way NFAS operates as a Fostering agency.

This SoP is made available to employees, carers, local authorities and can be accessed by birth families via the NFA website.

The SoP is reviewed and agreed as required or annually by the Registered Manager and the Management Team.

The office address is:

National Fostering Agency
1st floor
East Gateway
Beancross Road
Grangemouth
FK3 8WH
Tel: 01324 468 055

Registered Manager: Claire Devine

NFAS is registered with the Care Inspectorate:

Service provider number: SP2005007502
Care service number: CS2005098696



Our Vision, Our Mission and Our Promise

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 Promise

We are kind to ourselves and each other...

we work together...

and we make things happen.

The Promise

Within NFA Scotland we currently have a Promise working group whose purpose is to integrate The Promise and The Pinky Promise into everything we do, share, and communicate with our families and young people. Our aim is to shift policy, practice, and culture within NFA Scotland so that we can #KeepThePromise made to care experienced infants, children, young people, adults, and their families – that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, able to realise their full potential.

Voice: Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focused on children and those they trust.

Family: Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

Care: Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

People: The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

Scaffolding: Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required

Company Status

Senior Management Team (SMT)

Objectives

The Senior Management Team (SMT) are responsible for strategic planning for the company. This involves business planning which is in line with service user needs, company aims and objectives, financial commitments, organisational structure, and policy and procedure (which incorporates any new legislation), guidance and regulations. Our financial management ensures the very best value for our stakeholders.

The SMT is also responsible for setting performance targets and subsequent monitoring, in addition to ensuring the legal compliance of the organisation.

The Registered Manager meets with the Regional Director/Responsible Individual on a monthly basis to discuss the performance and quality of the agency and review the business objectives in line with the agency's annual development and business plans.

Central support services within the National Fostering Group include: Human Resources, Finance, Training, Quality Assurance, Compliance, Fostering Enquiry Centre & National Assessment Service, and contribute to the effective operations of the agency on a day-to-day basis.

Principles

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) strives to attain leadership status across the UK by delivering with professional integrity and high standards of quality care for the children placed with our Foster Carers. The Principles and aims of the agency are based around the 8 Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI) outlined below and is underpinned by the Secure Based Model of supervision.

The Welfare Principle

By providing focused solutions, our Foster Carers and Supervising Social Workers ensure that the educational, health, identity and social welfare needs of children are paramount in their thinking and comprehensively delivered to achieve positive outcomes.

Valuing Individuality

By providing carefully matched, and professionally trained and supported Foster Carers, the National Fostering Agency (Scotland) provides an effective and quality service. NFA Scotland believes the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved by good quality matching that takes into account a child's identity including ethnicity, culture and religious needs.

Partnership & Consultation

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland), Foster Carers and Supervising Social Workers strive to work in close partnership with the Child, Social Worker, Parent(s) and all other Individuals and Agencies involved in the Child's care. The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) believes that children's wishes and feelings should be taken into account and included in all care planning and review meetings. The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) recognises that within such planning Safe Caring is imperative.

Investors in People

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

We have joined New Family Social (NFS) the only UK charity led by LGBT+ foster carers. This gives our caregivers free access to its service.

National Fostering Agency (Scotland) reports to the National Fostering Group Executive Team and Senior Management Team's.



Aims and Objectives

“Putting children at the heart of everything we do”

Aims and Objectives

We strive to deliver high standards of quality care and the best possible outcomes for the children and young people with our fostering families.

The agency is committed to the delivery of a service that exceeds the standards of care compatible with statutory and regulatory requirements. The agency is inspected on a regular basis by The Care inspectorate. In addition, a number of the local authorities that we work with carry out checks to ensure we are meeting our mutual contractual requirements and obligations.

Primary aims:

- To provide a high-quality service and the best possible outcomes for children and young people of all ages, whose needs have been assessed by the Responsible Local Authority as being best met by them living with a foster family
- To ensure children are only placed with foster parents who have been recruited, assessed, approved and reviewed in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance
- To support, supervise, and provide on-going training to foster parents to enable them to meet the individual needs of the children living with them
- To continually strive to develop and improve our services through evaluation and feedback on our work

Objectives:

- To ensure the provision of the highest possible quality care and outcomes to fostered children in a physically safe and emotionally secure family home
- To meet the fostered child's individual needs and enable the best possible outcomes, in accordance with their care plan
- To have 24-hour support for foster parents and children 365 days a year

- To value diversity and promote equality, by recognising the importance of children's ethnic origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background; and to consider fully their gender, sexuality and any disability they may have
- To develop the child's sense of identity and self-worth
- To promote child's health and wellbeing, including their physical, mental and emotional welfare
- To promote the child's educational attendance, achievement, attainment, with the aim of their potential being reached
- To promote and support the child's important relationships, to include agreed time with their family and friends, in accordance with their care plan
- To prepare children for age-appropriate independence
- To seek the views, wishes, opinions, and aspirations, of children and to promote participation alongside, their families and foster parents
- To facilitate learning opportunities to foster parents that enables them to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding to better meet the needs of the children they are caring for
- To offer foster homes that carefully consider and match the needs of the child to the foster parent's skills and experience
- To support the stability of foster homes and minimising the damaging effects of unplanned endings for children and foster families
- To maintain the skill and knowledge base of staff, managers and foster panel members by providing effective training and staff development programmes
- To monitor and review agency policies, procedures and practice on a regular basis
- To use experience, best practice, and research to inform practice

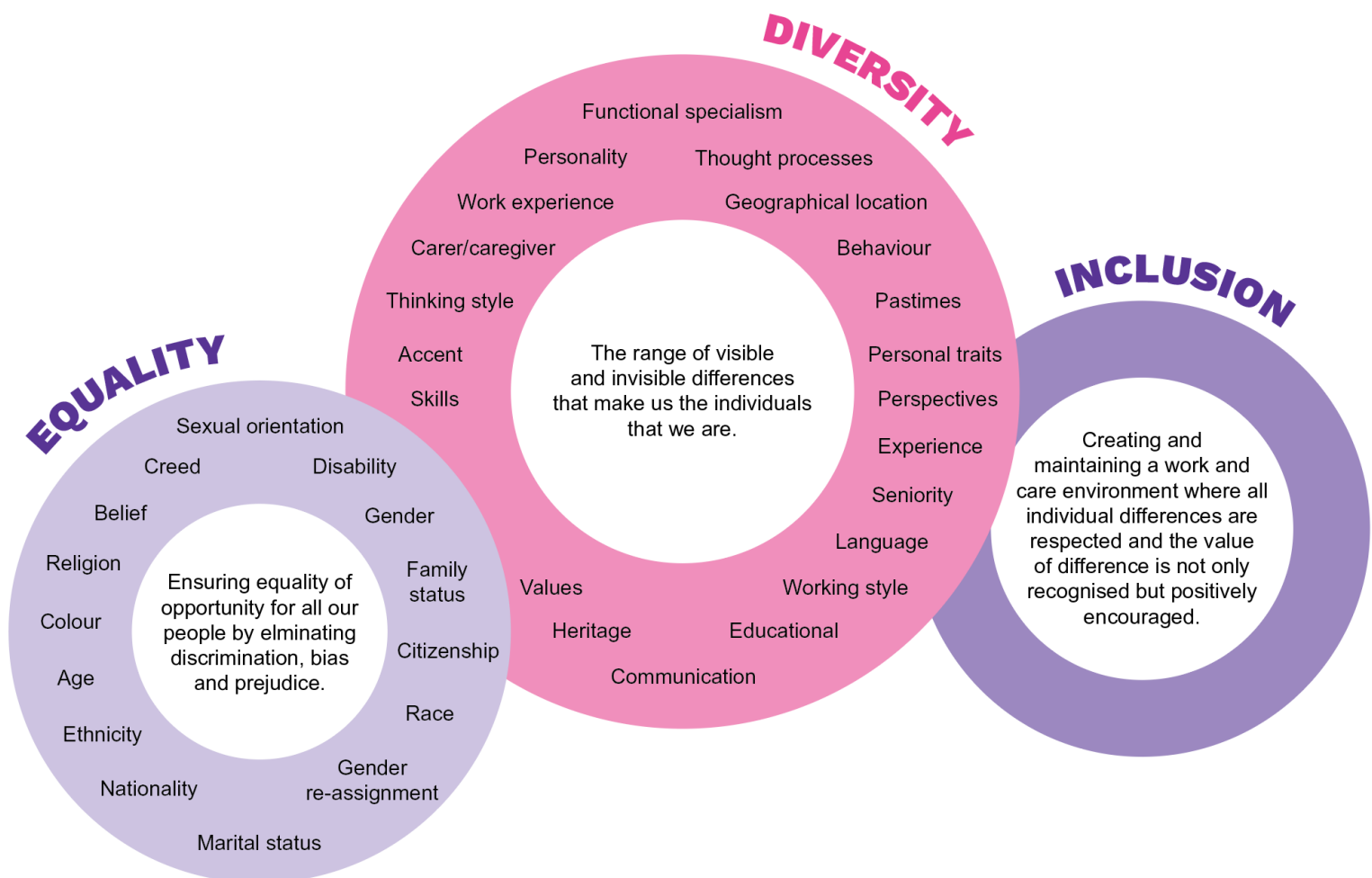
Commitment to Equality and Diversity

At **National Fostering Agency Scotland** we recognise the diverse society and communities in which we all live and work. We embrace and celebrate diversity, respect difference and promote equality of opportunity. We aim to recruit staff and carers from all backgrounds to reflect the demographics of the regions in which we operate, and to meet the diverse needs of the fostered children we care for.

We are aware that discrimination, prejudice, unfairness and oppression can exist in every aspect of daily living, including education, employment, health and social care.

We are committed to enabling all fostered children, foster parents and their children, and employees to reach their full potential as individuals, unimpeded by discrimination, unfairness or oppressive behaviour within the organisation.

At **National Fostering Agency Scotland** we want all fostered children in our care, 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 user groups.



Scottish Government

The purpose of the Scottish Government is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The current Minister for Children, Young People and keeping The Promise is Natalie Don who was appointed in March 2023.

Natalie Don
The Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Email: scottish.minister@gov.scotland

Crucial programmes and publications are:

- Getting it Right for Every Child
- The vision for Scotland's Children
- For Scotland's Children
- A Curriculum for Excellence
- Integrated Children's Services
- The Promise
- How Well Do We Protect Scotland's Children
- HMIE Publications www.hmie.gov.uk

For further information, please do explore the extensive website: www.scotland.gov.uk

Looked After Children

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) is working in partnership with Local Authorities and currently provides Fostering families for approximately 200 Children and Young People.

Children's Guides are provided to all children over the age of five years when children move in to an NFA fostering family for 6 weeks. Each NFA foster carer has access to a Children's Guide. Children's Guides are provided to ensure that Children and Young people are aware of whom the NFA are and what the NFA does. Also, to ensure that they have access to the complaints system and the contact details for Scotland's Commissioner for children and young people (SCCYP) and contact details of the Care Inspectorate.

Children's Guides contain further information about what to do if children and young people are not feeling happy & safe, information about bullying and a 'have your say' feedback form which they can complete and return to the Supervising Social Worker. The feedback from children and young people is included within Foster Carers Annual Reviews and forms are monitored to ensure that foster carers are providing a high standard of care.

Along with the statutory issues covered in the Looked after Children agreements, NFA (Scotland) Supervising Social Workers will ensure that children are aware of their rights whilst in foster care and that they have the information they need with regard to pocket money, clothing allowance, savings, travel & lunch monies, and birthday and festival allowances

Supervising Social Workers ensure that they meet independently with all children and young people at least three times a year, together with at least one unannounced visit, to ensure that their views are heard and recorded within NFA (Scotland) database recordings. Auditing and management systems help ensure the quality of the service provision.

Nationally, and locally, the NFA works closely with external agencies, both public and private, with the aim of meeting children's needs.

Protection of Children and Young People

The National Fostering Agency (NFA) recognises child protection as a key priority. NFA is committed to providing foster homes for children where they will be happy and safe and able to develop to their full potential.

To champion child protection NFA:

- Provides specialised training in child protection, from an approved provider, to all NFA employees. There is a stand alone course covering Child Protection for all carers. Foster carers are requested to complete online child protection training prior to approval
- Ensures clear child protection policies for employees and foster carers.
- Operates an annual Safeguarding Audit
- Formed a Safeguarding Committee
- All SSW staff are members to the National Working Group (NWG) organisation providing advice on CSE, Trafficking, Radicalisation and all forms of exploitation

Scotland

Key messages:

- Many children do not tell anyone they are being abused or neglected and when they do tell they normally tell a friend, not an adult and particularly not a professional
- Boys are less likely to seek help when they have been abused • When children seek help from agencies, they seek help from ChildLine, but ChildLine Scotland is only able to answer 48% of calls
- Adults, particularly men, are often reluctant or anxious about contacting child protection agencies when they have worries about a child
- Young people and adults are often critical of the service they receive from child protection agencies
- The child protection system does not always protect children and young people

For further information please read the NFA Child Protection Policy (Scotland).

Management and Regional Team Structure

Management Structure

Employees and Structure

Scotland's Organisations Structure is regularly reviewed and updated and is available on request. The strategic direction, service development and performance of NFAS is monitored and reviewed by the senior management board. The Registered Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the agency. The Registered Manager ensures that all carers are properly supported and that the outcomes for children and young people are met through the implementation of the agencies policies and procedures. The Registered Manager reports to the Operations Director.

All the National Fostering Agency (Scotland's) Managers, Supervising Social Workers are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council, have recognised qualifications in Social Work and have experience in Child Care and Fostering. Our staff hold Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scotland Certificate (which are renewed by Disclosure Scotland every two years).

Quality Assurance

NFAS promotes a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback about our services is central to our delivery. Operational staff are supported by the quality assurance and compliance teams where a focus is on quality and continuous development throughout the region. The NFA has a Quality Assurance and a Compliance Department. The Compliance Team check adherence to policy, procedure and legislation. The QA team provides a QA Manager for the Region who assists and supports with panel matters. In addition, all new Form F Assessments are overseen by the NFA Group National Assessment Centre, who are responsible for Quality Assuring all assessments.



Management and Regional Team Structure


NFA Scotland Organisational Chart




Registered Manager
Claire Devine



Team Manager
Helen Grainey



Office Manager
Teri Callaghan





Carer Engagement Officer
Pamela Goodfellow



Team Manager
Leeanne Robertson

 Advanced Practitioner Sharon McMillan	 SSW Linda Davies
 SSW Leonie Sgravemade	 SSW Milly Otoo
 SSW Joanna McTeague	 SSW Arlene McKay
 C& YP Worker Jennifer Batt	

 Administrator Sharon McMartin
 Administrator Laura Maxwell

 SSW Ashley Hutchison - Jack	 Advanced Practitioner Shelley Lefort
 SSW Hazel Clayton	 SSW Ally Stewart
 SSW Stefanie Eaglesham	 SSW Ellie Collin
 SSW Anna Munro	 SSW Cathy Quinn
 Support worker Eleni Daskalaki-Denman	 Support worker Sarah Burns

Management and Regional Team Structure

The Staff Team

The registered office is based in Grangemouth.

The Supervising Social Workers & Support Team, and Carer Recruitment Officer can work remotely to ensure that we meet the needs of our foster carers and children and young people. All our Social Workers hold recognised professional social work qualifications and are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

The Regional Director

The Regional Director has a key strategic role and is responsible for developing and managing all aspects of fostering resources and support functions in all registrations within their allocated region.

The Regional Director supervises the Registered Manager and supports them in delivering a high-quality service demonstrated by the results of external inspections, stakeholder feedback (Local Authorities, carers, children and young people), internal audits and key performance indicators. The Regional Director ensures that operating objectives and standards of performance are understood and owned by the whole staff team, seeking to continuously improve performance across all areas of service delivery and delivering aspirational outcomes for children and young people.

The Registered Manager

The Registered Manager is responsible for the overall operation of the agency, including the supervision of the Team Managers, Business Manager and the Carer Recruitment Officer.

The Registered Manager is responsible for producing the agency's business plan, achieving business objectives and maintaining budgetary control of the agency. They are also involved with the development and implementation of the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation and meet monthly with Senior Managers and Directors. The Registered Manager ensures that all practice is in accordance with agency policy and procedures and contributes to the review and updating of these.

They oversee the completion of ongoing auditing and monitoring of the service to ensure the fostering service is of the highest standard. The Registered Manager monitors and advises on serious complaints and allegations and ensures the appropriate procedures are followed and safeguards are in place.

The Team Manager

The Team Manager has line management and supervisory responsibility for the agency's Supervising Social Workers. The Team Manager oversees the day-to-day support offered to the agency's foster carers and children and makes case decisions accordingly as part of this. The Team Manager oversees the matches undertaken for children referred to the agency, along with supporting positive outcomes being achieved for all children placed. In conjunction with the Registered Manager the Team Manager undertakes auditing, ensures compliance with the Fostering Regulations and Guidance, and strives to achieve good outcomes for children. The Team Manager oversees the assessment and review of the agency's prospective and existing foster carers.

The SSWs have responsibility for the assessment, support, supervision and annual review of foster carers. In addition, they work in close partnership with the Looked After Children's Social Worker and will attend Looked After Reviews and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings with the foster carer to ensure the very best outcomes are achieved for children living with our carers. SSWs are responsible for monitoring the continuous professional development and training of foster carers. They ensure that all foster carers complete Training, Support and Development.



Management and Regional Team Structure

Standards (TSDs) and maintain an ongoing portfolio; working closely with the Learning and Development Team to facilitate this. In addition, SSWs co-ordinate and deliver support groups for foster carers and provide the frontline delivery of Out of Hours Services to carers.

Fostering Support Worker

Fostering Support Workers (FSW) provide specific support services to both foster carers and children and young people and have experience of working with children in a variety of settings. Input is time-limited, and solution focussed to enable those supported to achieve personal growth and development. Support services can include occasional transporting, supervising family time and undertaking direct work with children and young people. Direct work covers areas such as the development of independence skills, educational support and preparing for employment and further education, self-protection and risk reduction skills, improving self-confidence and self-esteem. This list is not exhaustive, and all packages of work are bespoke to the individual needs of the child or young person, enabling them to aspire and achieve their best potential. Support Workers also run groups and activities for both fostered children and children who foster which provides them with opportunities to socialise, share experiences and derive support from their own peer groups.

Carer Recruitment Officer (CRO)

The CRO is responsible for implementing the recruitment and marketing strategy, organising carer recruitment and retention activities/events and the initial screening of prospective foster carers. The CRO works closely with the regional management team, referral coordinators and panel administrator and more widely across the National Fostering Group with the Head of Carer Recruitment to ensure the 'carer journey' is personal, timely and effective in recruiting and retaining foster carers.

The Referrals Hub

The Referral Hub manages all incoming referrals and keyworking relationships with Local Authority fostering teams in order to identify potential foster family's for looked after children. The Referrals Hub liaises with foster carers and works closely with social workers and managers to ensure that good

matching takes place by qualified social work staff; coordinating all arrangements through to the child moving in.

The Referrals Hub has responsibility for collation and initial analysis of referral and matching data, and works closely with the Registered Manager to agree contracts and financial arrangements for foster placements.

Office Manager

The Office manager has responsibility for maintaining the relevant checks for foster carers, adult household members and their support network e.g. PVG, Medicals, LA checks. They also have responsibility for the collation and distribution of all Annual Review and Fostering Panel paperwork, room bookings, food and refreshment.

Fostering Clinical Services

Clinicians working in Fostering Services are qualified Psychologists, Psychotherapists and Play Therapist with experience of working with families and with children with histories of trauma including neglect, violence, and abuse. They bring to the roles an extensive knowledge and experience of child development, trauma, and interpersonal dynamics within families, as well as understanding of the psychology of individuals. The focus of much of the work for clinicians in fostering is on supporting Carers to use therapeutic approaches, including managing their own responses to difficult situations they are in; this is to support the child to feel safe, to develop and to flourish.

To achieve this, Clinicians offer consultations with Supervising Social Workers to develop understanding of families and children and develop next steps, and consultations with families. Direct work with children can also be provided where this is needed. Training is offered to both carers and to Supervising Social Workers to support their knowledge and practice in working with families. In addition, support groups with carers are offered, as well as reflective practice sessions with Supervising Social Workers. These are examples of what can be offered; at other times, a more extensive assessment may be needed for the child. What is provided will be driven by developing an understanding of what the child and the carers need, and this will be approached by working collaboratively with both Carers, Supervising Social workers and other professionals involved with the family to offer a full multi-disciplinary approach.

Services Provided by the Agency

National Fostering Agency Scotland works closely with a number of Local Authorities to understand their specific needs relating to children needing a foster family in particular areas. As an agency we then look to recruit foster families from a range of backgrounds who are able to provide the best possible homes for fostered children in the care of Local Authorities. The types of foster care provided are:

Emergency

Many of our foster families can provide unplanned emergency care for individual children or sibling groups. Referrals can be made both within office hours, and through our Out of Hours service.

Respite/Short Breaks

We have a number of foster parents that can provide short break care either on a regular basis or one-off holiday breaks.

Interim

Interim foster care can vary in duration but can be for up to a couple of years as they are often linked to further assessments of the child, family or connected persons. Often interim foster care can involve court processes that consider the long-term plans for fostered children which can take time.

Bridging

Many of our foster families can provide care with foster parents who are experienced in bridging children to adoption, permanence or independence. Bridging care forms part of the long-term plan for the child and usually last up to 2 years.

Long Term/Permanence

Many of our foster families like to offer long-term stability for fostered children by offering long-term or permanent care for them .i.e. until they are 18 and through into adulthood.

Parent with Child

Some of our foster families can offer support to children and their parents for periods of time. Typically, in these scenarios foster parents will also be assisting Local Authorities with their assessments by providing information relating to parenting capacity/capabilities.

Solo

If the placing authority requires the child/young person to be the only child in the family, this would need to be clearly identified and discussed at the referral stage to enable appropriate matching with appropriate vacant foster parents.

Sibling

Many of our foster parents have the skills, experience and accommodation to care for large groups of brothers and sisters, enabling fostered children to stay together. This is always undertaken in line with matching considerations and the care plan for the children.

Unaccompanied Children and Young People

Many our foster parents have developed the skills and experience for providing care to fostered children who are unaccompanied from overseas, enabling these children to settle and engage in education and positive family experiences.

Continuing Care

Refers to the arrangements whereby Young People aged 18 and older that were previously looked after remain living with their former foster carers.

Bridge to Foster

Bridge to foster is a specialist wrap around package of support and clinical input to support children and young people transitioning from residential establishments to live in a family. Set across four stages the package reduces in support and levels of clinical input as the child settles and the arrangement is felt to be stable. Increased social work support ensures foster carers can share any concerns and develop new approaches to working through the challenges of helping children adjust to family life.

Invictus

A specialist provision providing clinical assessment and work directly for the child and foster carer/s. Children and young people sometimes need extra support through work with a clinician and this usually is a referral to an external clinical resource such as CAHMS. Accessing such services can bring delays in the foster carers obtaining the extra support needed for the child. With a dynamic training package, Invictus aims to equip foster carers with the knowledge to build on exiting skills.

Matching

Matching children to the best possible fostering family is a carefully considered process. We recognise that getting it right is critical and will advance the progress, experience, and outcomes for fostered children, increase family stability and retention, and provide children and foster families with positive outcomes.

At **National Fostering Agency Scotland** we recognise that children are individuals, with a diverse range of experiences, needs, and talents, requiring fostering parents that are equally unique. Our foster parents have a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience, and our task is to carefully match children, with those foster parents who have the best possible experience, knowledge, skill set, and approach to meet their individual needs.

The Referrals Hub team are on hand to assist referring Local Authorities in finding the right match for children. They work closely with the agency's Supervising Social Workers, foster parents and Local Authorities to ensure the best possible matches are made.

National Fostering Agency Scotland will not propose a foster family if the assessed needs of the child/young person cannot reasonably be provided by the proposed foster parents.

During the referral and matching process foster parents are provided with all information made available to the agency in order for them to make fully informed decisions about whether they can meet the child's known and potential future needs and care plan. Foster parents are fully involved in the matching process and will ultimately make the final decision in conjunction with the Registered Manager and/or the Team Manager as to whether, or not, they can offer the child a foster home.



National Fostering Agency Scotland also offers an emergency care service outside normal working hours. Referrals in these instances will be managed by one of the agency's Supervising Social Workers, in conjunction with an agency duty manager, who will review the needs and circumstances of the fostered child referred and any suitable vacancies with the agency's foster families and match these to carers approved for emergency foster care. The Supervising Social Workers have full access to carer information outside working hours, so quality matching is maintained in the same way as it is within office hours.

National Fostering Group Children's Pledge

Our Pledge To You. We Will:

Keep you safe and care well for you

Ensure you live in a safe and homely place
Listen to you, particularly when you raise concerns about your safety or the quality of your care
Ensure that those people who care for you are trained and supported to keep you safe
Make sure you are prepared for the next stage of your life – including managing money, looking after your health and taking care of where you live

Help you get a good education (achieve and enjoy)

Make sure your education meets your needs
Help you to attend your education provision and make good progress
Have high expectations for your potential
Celebrate your educational achievements
Help those who care for you to have the right advice to support your education

Help you be healthy and enjoy life

Help you to be physically and emotionally well
Support you to take part in clubs and/or hobbies that interest you
Support you to make healthy eating decisions and to cook healthy food
Help you to socialise with your friends (as long as this is safe)
Support you to take part in exercise and have fun

Support your future and your next adventure

Help you to take part in positive activities
Support you to undertake work experience
Help you to find employment, an apprenticeship or to study further
Support you to take part in an adventure when you reach sixteen

Small steps, big outcomes.

Consultation and Support for Children and Young People

Children & Young People's Rights

As a partner agency of the National Fostering Group, **National Fostering Agency Scotland** supports UNICEF's mission statement to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. In doing so, the agency, its staff and foster carers will uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Participation and Consultation

National Fostering Agency Scotland is committed to the inclusion of all stakeholders in the review and development of its services. The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are vital to ensuring the services meet their needs and remain relevant in a changing environment. Consultation takes various forms either through questionnaires, online surveys, consultation events, activities and feedback forms for carer annual reviews and LAC reviews. All children and young people receive a copy of their own newsletter filled with interesting news and articles from, and relevant to, children and young people.

Support for Children in our Care

The children placed with the **National Fostering Agency Scotland** come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and it is imperative that they receive the highest standards of care to enable them to aspire and achieve in our care.

To this end, **National Fostering Agency Scotland** has established a clear online manual of policies and procedures that outlines the standards expected from all foster carers and staff.

In addition, when the Local Authority and agency have agreed that an identified foster carer can meet the needs of a child; a fostering contract is made agreeing the duration and objectives of the care required. Wherever possible The Local Authority Social Worker, the child and their parents (if considered appropriate) are invited to visit the foster home for a pre-move in meeting. This gives an opportunity to meet and create a Fostering Agreement/Care Plan.

It is expected that the Child's Social Worker will bring documentation to the meeting.

All children and young people in foster care will receive a copy of the Children's Guide at the time of moving in, and will be supported to understand the contents of this via their foster carer, or via a 1:1 session with a member of staff from the agency. Supervising Social Workers will see each child placed on a regular basis (at least quarterly) to ascertain their views about their care and home. During these visits the Supervising Social Worker will see the child's bedroom to ensure that it is as it should be and appropriate to meet their needs.

Services available for children can include:

- Support to find a hobby, sport, interest
- Support with development of independence skills
- Bespoke individual 1:1 work to address an assessed need
- Group work to address thematic issues e.g. use of social media
- Social events and activities for both children looked after and those who foster e.g. arts and craft activities, cookery competitions, festival celebrations.
- Life story or permanence preparation for moving on

Physical Environment

National Fostering Agency Scotland pride themselves on the standard of their foster homes providing safe, stimulating, caring environments, where there is a focus on health, education, protection, continuity, diet and stimulation.

All children have their own bedroom unless the Placing Authority has given permission for them to share (in the case of brother and sisters or holiday accommodation). Children are encouraged to individualise their rooms. It is a requirement that all children are provided with a quiet area for study within the foster home and have access to a computer and the internet (where appropriate). All foster homes are assessed for a healthy and safe environment on an annual basis, which is routinely monitored through monthly supervisory visits. Play areas are safe and enclosed and all play equipment is checked to ensure it is in good working order.

Consultation and Support for Children and Young People

Boundary Setting

Each foster home has their own Family Safer Caring Plan which highlights boundaries and expectations within each home. Risk assessments and strategies relating to each child's circumstances and behaviour are agreed in the child's Fostering Agreement & Care Plan, and incorporated within their risk assessment, which is completed when the child moves in.

Policies on sanctions control, restraint and complaints procedures are available to children, parents and professionals as required. These policies are imperative to ensure that behaviours are responded to in a consistent and fair manner. Any form of corporal punishment is forbidden. Foster carers strive to offer a consistent environment and the role models that children require.

Healthy Care

In partnership with the foster carer, Social Worker and Health Authority, establish the individual health needs of each child in our care. Wherever possible children will continue using their own health resources, if this is not possible children will be:

- Registered with a GP
- Registered with a dentist
- Registered with an optician

National Fostering Agency Scotland has policies on keeping, administering, and the recording of medication which each foster carer who is expected to adhere to; this is monitored by the foster parent's Supervising Social Worker and the Registered Manager. Foster carers encourage children to eat a varied diet. Special dietary requirements are written into the child's Care Plan. Foster carers encourage children to participate in regular exercise to ensure the development of good physical, emotional and psychological health. Children are encouraged to attend out of school activities to enable them to widen their social circle and develop any talents and skills they may have.

Our foster carers will:

- Encourage children to eat a varied diet – any special dietary requirements are written into the Child's Plan/Care Plan
- Encourage and enable children to participate in regular exercise to ensure good physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing
- Ensure that fostered children attend routine and required health appointments and annual health assessments, dental and optician appointments
- Ensure that fostered children receive all required childhood immunisations
- Ensure that young people have access to sexual health information and advice to make informed decisions and choices
- Take the time to listen to young people giving them an outlet to share emotions, thoughts and feelings to promote positive emotional wellbeing.

Therapeutic Support Services

We believe that children and young people have a right to access therapeutic provision from Local Health Authorities. We have developed good working relationships with health colleagues in each local area and will access local provision wherever possible. If children cannot access local provision due to the timescales involved, or the complexity of the situation; the agency can commission the services of suitably qualified, experienced and accredited professionals to undertake the work e.g. play therapists, child psychologists, art therapists.

Education

National Fostering Agency Scotland believe that all children and young people have the fundamental right to experience an appropriate education which enables them to meet their potential. Our aim is to ensure that every child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals by the child's school, social worker and carer. Foster parents should be fully included in this review process. In addition, the agency will work with schools and placing authorities to ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), have been appropriately assessed to determine the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Consultation and Support for Children and Young People

Educational goals are important to build a firm foundation of academic and social learning to enable children to aspire and achieve their full academic potential, including formal qualifications. Where possible, children are enrolled at local schools and have the opportunity to form friendships and participate in extracurricular activities in the local community. The agency expects the Local Authority to provide teaching hours/alternative educational provision for those children without a school placement or can source bespoke educational packages at additional costs.

Time with Friends and Relatives

National Fostering Agency Scotland ensures that each child in our care is encouraged to maintain contact with those most important to them. We can provide facilities, by arrangement, to ensure a child is able to meet with their family, friends, or professionals involved with them, in privacy. Family time arrangements form part of the child's overall Care Plan. We would expect to be informed of any changes by the child's Local Authority. Transport to and from family time locally is the responsibility of the foster parent but needs to be negotiated to ensure each child's needs can be met by the foster carer (particularly if they have other children in their care) and that all parties remain safe.

Foster parents encourage children to make positive lasting friendships and will facilitate friends for tea visits and outings when appropriate. Foster parents contribute to informal family time arrangements with siblings looked after by other foster parents.

In accordance with applicable legislation, standards, regulations and guidance, **National Fostering Agency Scotland** look to work with the fostered child's parent(s) and Significant others. We understand the importance of meaningful involvement and the significant impact that this can have on the child or young person's life. Our staff members and foster parents are experienced in working with birth families in a way that positively recognises and respects their involvement.

Unauthorised Absence and Missing

All foster carers have access to the agency policy on children who go missing. If there are issues of risk, vulnerability or child sexual exploitation, then a strategy will be discussed and agreed with the Child's Social Worker, young person and foster carer. This is to ensure appropriate safeguards and supervision are in place, to further improve risk awareness and facilitate risk reduction. The agency will request the Local Authority conducts Return Home Interviews following all missing episodes.

Safeguarding Procedures

National Fostering Agency Scotland has safeguarding procedures in place which are in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children to safeguard and protect the welfare of all children. All staff and foster carers are required to fully adhere to these procedures. Where there is a need to review any safeguarding practices to ensure safe care is provided, this will be done in consultation with the Children's Social Worker, foster parent, and child (where possible).

Scottish Human Rights Commission

The Scottish Human Rights Commission promotes and protects the human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, which form part of the law of Scotland through the Human Rights Act 1998 and Scotland 1998. The Commission also promotes and protects other human rights which have been guaranteed by international conventions ratified by the UK.

If you would like to contact the Scottish Human Rights Commission call 0131 244 3550, or email hello@scottishhumanrights.com. You can write to them at Scottish Human Rights Commission, Governors House, and Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DE. Tel 0131 2443550. Their website is www.scottishhumanrights.com

Further Support

Nicola Killean is Scotland's Commissioner for children and young people (SCCYP) independent of both Parliament and the Scottish Government.

SCCYP can be contacted at:

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ

Telephone: 0131 346 5350

Freephone: 0800 019 1179

Fax: 0131 556 3378

Text 07702335720

Email: info@sccyp.org.uk

Website: www.sccyp.org.uk

Consultation and Support for Children and Young People

Outcomes Support – details of additional support offered to children, young people and foster families

The statistics available tell us that care-experienced children and young people are less likely to achieve well in their studies, more likely to suffer from mental health issues, more likely to enter the criminal justice system or, as an adult, other social care systems. At the National Fostering Group, we are working hard to change this bleak picture on an individual basis for children and young people in our foster homes and have dedicated support to help boost and improve outcomes. The additional resources can be accessed at any point, and the support offered aligns with our pledge to children and young people in one of our fostering families.

Education Support

The Group Education Lead can support with any education enquiry, big or small, from a simple question which needs answering, to getting directly involved in a case where a member of staff or a foster parent has been unable to get a suitable or appropriate educational outcome for their child or young person.

- Special Education Needs or Disabilities (SEND) support
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) support
- Support with exclusions, Personal Education Plans (PEPs), new schools, transition etc

This work is always sensitively undertaken with stakeholders, with the needs of the child and young person and a sense of what the desired outcome should be, at the heart of the support delivered.

Contact: Hannah Burson – hannah.burson@nfa.co.uk

Careers and Employability Support

This service can provide high-level support to social workers or foster families trying to find appropriate further opportunities for our young people. The service can also provide 1:1 Careers Advice and Guidance where necessary.

This is particularly important if:

- the young person is not currently in an education provision (NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training) or between education provisions
- the young person's current educational setting has not provided guidance at a suitable or appropriate level
- if opportunities for Careers Guidance were missed by the young person/adult

Contact: Hannah Burke – hannah.burke@nfa.co.uk who will refer you to the service

Adventures Support

The National Fostering Group can support young people to:

- Undertake an award with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at the three levels of Bronze, Silver or Gold
- Join an expedition adventure with British Exploring Society

These opportunities allow young people and adults to acquire essential personal and social skills. It connects them to their communities and the great outdoors in a positive manner. These activities can help to support and boost other outcomes for young people.

Contact: Angela Golland – angela.golland@nfa.co.uk

Carer Recruitment, Assessment and Approval

Recruitment

National Fostering Agency Scotland is committed to recruiting a diverse range of foster carers who can meet and match the needs of our children and young people.

The agency recruits individuals and families from different ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds and from all areas of the regions in which we operate who can bring a variety of skill, knowledge and experiences to the fostering task.

Application Process

National Fostering Agency Scotland website provides prospective carers with information, case examples and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help them make informed choices about fostering with this agency. Enquiries can be made online or by telephone, and a Pre-Initial Visit Screening Call will be undertaken by a Carer Recruitment Officer within 2 days of enquiry and this information will enable a decision to be made about whether or not to proceed with the enquiry and send out an Enquiry Pack.

All applicants must:

- Have a spare room
- Be over 21 years of age
- Be able to provide transport for children e.g. school, family time
- Be able to keep detailed records relating to children placed
- Be able to attend all relevant meetings
- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Have some IT skills

Initial Visits

Following the Initial Enquiry Screening Call, the Initial Visit (IV) will be arranged to take place at the prospective applicant's home by a suitably qualified and skilled member of the team. This provides an opportunity for the agency to share more detailed information with prospective carers around the realities of fostering, to answer any of their questions, and to view and assess the accommodation. The discussion will include exploration of skills, knowledge and motivation to foster, and any practical requirements. Following the visit, a report is completed by the visiting worker. All IV reports are reviewed by a Manager, and outcomes shared with the prospective applicant, at which point an application to be assessed as a foster parent could be invited.

Transferring Carers

National Fostering Agency Scotland recognises that foster parents 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 foster care are not detrimentally affected by the transfer. It is not uncommon for fostered children to remain with their foster parents following an agency transfer.



Carer Recruitment, Assessment and Approval

Assessment Process

All fostering assessments are based on the BAAF Form F, completed by qualified, registered social workers, and undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation, guidance and policy. The 2-stage assessment process (Stage 1 & 2) is expected to take a maximum of 4 months.

The assessment includes completion of a number of relevant statutory checks and references including: PVG, Local Authority Checks, Medical, Ex-Partner References, Personal References (x3), Employer References, Health & Safety checks and Letting Agent consent etc. The assessor will also agree a schedule of visits to complete the assessment in a timely, focussed manner. The Applicants will be invited to undertake Skills to Foster Training, delivered by in-house trainers, and this feedback will form part of the assessment process. The assessment is comprehensive and evidence based, producing a report that covers individual profiles, past and present relationships/partnerships, support networks, interviews with children and adult members of the household, lifestyle, parenting capacity and experience, valuing diversity. The report will make recommendations on the terms of approval e.g. number of children, age range, types of care, and will be presented to the agency Fostering Panel. The applicants will also be required to complete a Safe Care Policy, Fire Evacuation Plan and Carer Profile.

Following completion of the assessment, the applicants are invited to attend the fostering panel with their assessor, whereby the panel will make a recommendation on approval. The fostering panel membership is made up of both agency staff and independent members, and their experience is derived from a variety of backgrounds including health, education, and social care and fostering and includes members who have experienced the care system. The function of the panel is to provide an independent quality assurance role, to consider the approval of applicants and the continuation of approval of existing carers.

Following panel presentation, the applicants will be notified immediately of the panel's recommendation in respect of their application. However, the final decision as to the applicant's approval will be made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). If applicants are unhappy with the ADM decision, they have a right of appeal, which can be made direct to the agency, or the Independent Review Mechanism (England) within 28 days.

If, at any time during the assessment, the assessor feels the application falls short of the standards required, this will be discussed with the Team Manager immediately. Any areas of shortfall must be fully explored and where training or support will not bring the applicant up to acceptable standards, the assessment will be ended in line with the relevant fostering legislation and guidance. The applicants will be informed of this decision and the reasons.

Post Approval

The applicants become known as newly approved carers and will receive written confirmation of their approval. In addition, they will receive a Foster Carer Agreement detailing their responsibilities, and the agency's responsibilities, which must be signed. The agency will allocate a dedicated Supervising Social Worker to each fostering household, who will have responsibility for new carer induction and training plan, and for supporting the carers with completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) which must be completed within the first 12 months post approval.

Annual Reviews

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) reviews the approval of Foster Carers on an annual basis. The Foster Carer's Annual Review provides an opportunity to assess the work of the Foster Carer over the previous year. The decisions taken at the Annual Review are recorded and placed on our Computer Database.

However, there are other significant changes in circumstances that could trigger an early Foster Carer's Review. For example:

- A significant change in health
- A change to household membership
- A serious Complaint or Child Protection investigation
- A recent criminal conviction
- A Request to change Approval
- Unplanned ending of a child in your care

Foster Carers' lives are not static and the Annual Review provides an opportunity to discuss changes in a Foster Carer's Appointment Status: the type of fostering, number of children or their ages. It provides an opportunity for Foster Carers and Young People to discuss their views about the service The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) is providing.

The Foster Carers Annual Review is written by the allocated Supervising Social Worker and is split into two basic sections.

Section One –

You and Your Family

This section covers all basic information about the Fostering household:

- Changes in circumstances
- The effect of fostering on birth children
- Statutory issues, eg, medicals/police checks
- Training profile and needs for the coming year
- Details of nominated carer and regular visitors

Section Two – The Fostering Task

This section is a descriptive report and assessment by the Supervising Social Worker and covers the quality of service provided by the Foster Carer for each individual child in their care.

Areas covered include:

- Health
- Education
- Self-care skills
- Family Time
- Identity & social presentation
- Social and emotional development
- Complaints

The Foster Carer Annual Review is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer and carried out alongside the carers, and the SSW. The IRO will receive reports in advance from the Supervising Social Worker as well as reports gathered from:

- Each Foster Carer & their Children
- Each Foster Child
- Each Child's Social Worker
- Parental views (where appropriate)

The first Annual Review after approval must go to Panel for them to assess how Carers have been coping with the Fostering Task in their first year; and ratify the recommendation of continued approval. Thereafter reviews must be presented to panel at least every 3 years.

When securing a home for a child with Foster Carers, The Referral Co-ordinator may provide the relevant Local Authority with the most recent Annual Review along with the Form F if required.



Supervision and Support of Foster Carers

Each foster carer has a named Supervising Social Worker whose role is to provide them with advice and guidance in relation to a child's care plan and fostering plan.

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland)

Supervising Social Workers have four principal functions:

- To work with foster carers in developing and supervising their skills as well as offering regular structured support
- To represent in our relationship with Placing Authorities and to seek to ensure that care plans are made and followed for children in their care.
- To review foster carer's skills and achievements on an annual basis
- To promote and participate in training aimed at foster carers, their birth children and foster children

Supervising Carers

The relationship between Supervising Social Workers and foster carers should be professional and aimed at achieving the best interests of the children in the family. Problems and concerns should be openly addressed with a view to reaching a satisfactory resolution in accordance with fostering regulations and agency policies. It is important that Supervising Social Workers see the children frequently.

Supervisory Visits

foster carers will have a supervision visit at least monthly by a qualified social worker whose role is to support the foster carers and monitor the standard of care received by a child. The focus of the visit is twofold. The first part of the visit should concentrate on the foster carer's professional development, family dynamics, safe caring and the tasks required of them by the Agency. The second part of the visit should concentrate on the child's plans, achievements and development. Supervising Social Workers will carry out at least one unannounced visit each year and a Health and Safety Check List to be completed annually, prior to the foster carer's annual review.

Support

Support is a combination of listening, understanding and helping to find practical solutions/ways of coping with challenges. A successful Supervising Social Worker/foster carer relationship allows foster carers to talk openly and honestly about their own family problems as well as the difficulties/challenges they are having in caring for children they look after. The foster carer is supported in achieving the care plan for the children as part of a team.

The Supervising Social Workers work on a rota basis to provide a local Out of Hours support to foster carers on a 24/7 basis. A Duty Manager also provides back up to the Out of Hours service ensuring both staff and carers can access all the support and information they need.

Additional support services to assist in meeting the needs of children placed could include:

- Short Breaks (of varying duration)
- Day Care
- Structured activities
- Family time and visits between children, their family and friends.

Developing Skills

Developing skills means encouraging foster carers to attend training, helping them to put that training into practice, using resource material such as literature, guided reading, national legislation and agency policy.

Information and Record Keeping

Foster carers have access to a comprehensive online manual of procedures. The manual contains information and procedures on all aspects of the fostering task and is updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document. Foster carers are expected to maintain records of events and information pertaining to the child or young person they care for.

Supervision and Support of Foster Carers

Events

At **The National Fostering Agency (Scotland)** we hold a wide variety of events to support carers in building relationships with other carers and staff, to acknowledge the achievements of carers, and to participate in charitable fundraising activities e.g. Macmillan. Our events include informal carer coffee mornings and lunches, support groups, award & celebration events. The diversity of events allows everyone the opportunity to contribute and participate, enhancing relationships with each other, and the agency.

Support Groups

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) facilitates Carer Support Groups in several locations throughout the operating region to make them as accessible as possible to all foster carers. The groups are facilitated typically by Supervising Social Workers and provide a great opportunity for information sharing, exploring thematic issues or learning from research, discussing changes in practice, policy and legislation, and generally providing an opportunity for foster carers to interact in a social environment with other foster carers and derive peer support.

Newsletters

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) produces an internal monthly newsletter for staff, foster carers, and children that shares information and celebrates achievements. All recipients are encouraged to contribute to the newsletters content.

The National Fostering Group also produces a quarterly newsletter for all foster carers to share information on Group wide information and developments.

Membership

Once approved all foster carers are registered with The 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.

Insurance

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) has a comprehensive insurance package in place which fully covers all agency activities. This cover includes Personal and Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity and satisfies the insurance requirements for all fostering framework contracts awarded to the agency.

Fostering Clinical Services

Clinicians working in Fostering Services are qualified Psychologists, Psychotherapists and Playtherapist with experience of working with families and with children with histories of trauma including neglect, violence, and abuse. They bring to the roles an extensive knowledge and experience of child development, trauma, and interpersonal dynamics within families, as well as understanding of the psychology of individuals. The focus of much of the work for clinicians in fostering is on supporting Carers to use therapeutic approaches, including managing their own responses to difficult situations they are in; this is to support the child to feel safe, to develop and to flourish.

To achieve this, Clinicians offer consultations with Supervising Social Workers to develop understanding of families and children and develop next steps, and consultations with families. Direct work with children can also be provided where this is needed. Training is offered to both carers and to Supervising Social Workers to support their knowledge and practice in working with families. In addition, support groups with carers are offered, as well as reflective practice sessions with Supervising Social Workers. These are examples of what can be offered; at other times, a more extensive assessment may be needed for the child. What is provided will be driven by developing an understanding of what the child and the carers need, and this will be approached by working collaboratively with both Carers, Supervising Social workers and other professionals involved with the family to offer a full multi-disciplinary approach.

Training and Development

The National Fostering Group (NFG) recognises that our Foster Carers play a crucial role in the lives of the children and young people we care for. We want our Foster Carers to feel confident, knowledgeable, and ultimately be the best they can be for their foster children.

Our training courses are available to all our foster carers – completely free and delivered nationally, locally, and digitally. They range from the mandatory core courses for new Foster Carers, through to tailored training for specialist types of foster care.

Our Approach to Training at the National Fostering Group

With modern technologies at our disposal, training is delivered through a blended learning approach. This includes online learning, workshops/seminars, digital resources, and self-directed learning as well as face to face classroom sessions. This means we can support all of our Foster Carers wherever their location.

We also have a skilled and dedicated Learning and Talent team who work alongside and collaborate with our clinical psychologists to develop and deliver high quality learning solutions.

Training audit data is regularly reviewed to assess regional compliance and identify any gaps. Foster carers have a Personal Development Plan which is reviewed as part of ongoing supervision and annual appraisal.

Skills to Foster Training

The fostering journey usually begins with the Skills to Foster Pre-approval course, this prepares new applicants for fostering.

The course focuses on the practical, day-to-day skills that all foster carers need. It links into the Training, Support and Development Standards in England, other professional development qualifications, as well as a competency-based assessment process. It is relevant UK wide.

The course also provides our applicants with an opportunity to meet other applicants, experienced Foster Carers, who can share their expertise and some of the key people who will be supporting them throughout their journey, such as Supervising Social Workers and Registered Managers.

And it goes without saying that our training is fun, informative and offers real insight into what lies ahead.

Core Training

Skills to Foster is just the beginning. We have a number of additional courses that are mandatory for all Foster Carers. Please refer to the Foster Carer Mandatory Pack for details of each course.



Training and Development

The Foundations for Therapeutic Parenting Programme

We are fully committed to becoming the provider of choice for child-centred and trauma informed practice within children's services – enhanced by further specialist support and training around learning disabilities and other complex diagnoses. We want to create a consistent shared language and golden thread that runs through all our services – Fostering, Education and Residential Care – that focusses on the primary task of building healing relationships with our children and young people.

The programme is three phased – Introduction, Foundation and Advanced courses – to ensure that professional and practice development is extensive and ongoing for all our teams. This means that our Foster Carers can expect to share the classroom and their experiences and knowledge with National Fostering Group colleagues as well as other carers.

Each course focuses on keeping concepts accessible and understandable – and on developing the ability to put theory into practice. The key areas are;

- The impact of complex trauma and adverse childhood experiences on children's development
- Understanding behaviour as a form of communication
- Building therapeutic relationships through PACE approaches
- The importance of reflective practice

We also provide access to a significant amount of online research resources. Learners can then develop at their own pace as well as having somewhere to research or explore ideas they want to know more about - in their own time or with their Supervising Social Worker.

Continued Professional Development

As professionals we all share a responsibility to develop our skills and knowledge. Legislation, child research and policies are continually changing and evolving, therefore our continued professional development offer is essential.

We have an extensive suite of courses that aim to address specific training needs, here is just a small sample of topics:

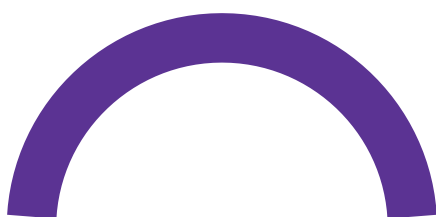
- Introduction to Neurodevelopmental Differences
- Various Contextualised Safeguarding Topics – including CSE, County Lines, FGM, etc.
- Parent and Child
- Bridge to Foster

Our Foster Carers training is managed via a world class Learning Management System (LMS). This means that they can see at a glance what training is required for their role, check their own progress, enrol on classroom and virtual courses and access hundreds of online learning modules from our partners at Litmos Heroes – all for free!

These include the following suites of courses:

- Care Certificate
- Communication and Social Skills
- Cyber Security
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Health and Wellbeing
- Finance Skills
- Food Hygiene
- IT Skills
- Personal Development

There really is something for everyone and content is added to our LMS regularly.



Promoting Educational Outcomes

NFA fully promotes educational achievement. Foster carers' abilities to promote education are addressed in all aspects of our services to foster carers: recruitment, assessment, approval processes, training and quality assurance.

The NFA operate a comprehensive Education Policy.

The Outcomes application will provide a baseline audit in the area of education. For example, the number of children that are excluded from school, attendance, and exam results. In line with GIRFEC it will also measure achievement in a broader sense for example, membership of clubs, and national awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh. NFAS have an Educational Advisor who provides advice, guidance and support in partnership with the SSW. We have an educational handbook that is included in each Foster carers welcome pack.

The NFA publications emphasize the enjoyment of education and achievement and NFA newsletters regularly feature

- Book reviews, the benefits of reading and writing
- The benefits and the risks of information technology
- Covers a range of subjects including: music, art science and sport
- Study tips
- Useful websites
- Details of Foster care membership to encyclopedia Britannica
- Access to NFAS Education lead for Scotland, providing Scotland specific advice for our C&YP



Complaints

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) Complaints Procedure deals equitably and speedily with any Complaint made by Foster Carers, Social Workers or Children. The agency has a whistleblowing policy to encourage employees/volunteers to feel confident in raising concerns. All concerns will be taken seriously and fully investigated.

Complaints by Foster Carers

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) 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 relevant Manager to resolve any concerns. If the Foster Carer is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Registered Manager for investigation. The Director will acknowledge this complaint in writing within seven days and the investigation will be completed within 21 days (or as long as it is necessary to reach a satisfactory outcome).

Complaints by Children, Parents or Social Workers

The Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carer will be informed immediately of any complaint made by a Young Person or a Parent if appropriate. In the first instant, 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.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) Director for investigation. NFA will acknowledge this complaint in writing within seven days and the investigation will be completed within 21 days. (or as long as it necessary to reach a satisfactory outcome).

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) Registered Manager will inform all parties of the outcome of the investigation in writing following its completion.

Letters of formal complaint can be sent to: National Fostering Agency Scotland, 1st Floor, East Gateway, Beancross Road, Grangemouth FK3 8WH

Allegations of Abuse

All Allegations of Abuse are immediately reported to the Team Manager, Service Manager and Registered Manager, the Local Authority Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate.

All Allegations of Abuse are dealt with in accordance with the Child's Local Authority Child Protection Teams.

Care Inspectorate (SCSWIS)

The Care Inspectorate inspects, regulates and supports improvement of care and social work and child protection services across Scotland.

All Children placed have a statutory right to an Independent Complaints Procedure through the Care Inspectorate.

All Foster Carers have a statutory right to an Independent Complaints Procedure through Care Inspectorate.

Care Inspectorate Enquiries

- Concerns can be reported to the Care Inspectorate, using the online complaints form at concerns@careinspectorate.gov
- 0345 600 9527
- Scotland National Office, Care Inspectorate Compass House, Discovery Quay 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY



Professional Membership

CoramBAAF

As a partner agency of the National Fostering Group,

The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) has a corporate membership with CoramBAAF.

CoramBAAF promotes the highest standards of child-centred policies and services.

It influences policy-makers, helps find new families for children and supports professionals, adoptive parents and foster carers.

The Fostering Network

As a partner agency of the National Fostering Group,

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.

NWG

As a partner agency of the National Fostering Group, The National Fostering Agency (Scotland) has a corporate membership with NWG which 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 the National Fostering Group) so that they may receive advice and support on individual cases.

Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP)

NAFP is a not-for-profit company formed in 2008 comprising of independent and voluntary sector fostering providers. This trade association acts as one voice and is therefore able to campaign and represent the sector more effectively. In addition, it allows members to share knowledge and experience within the sector and provides formal representation in national forums and sector developments.

Research in Practice

Our Social Workers and Managers have membership of Research in Practice which brings together academic research and practice expertise. This ensures our staff have access to the latest research, policy, case law, legal updates and resources to support and enhance their professional practice.

Restraint Reduction Network

We are members of the Restraint Reduction Network – the world leading restraint reduction charity. Our membership demonstrates our commitment to reducing restrictive practice. It provides staff with the opportunity to learn from sector leaders and access news, guidance and resources to inform their work with children, young people and their carers.

Continuing Care Arrangement

As part of our service NFAS believe that every young adult who was fostered as a child has the right to benefit from a positive experience enabling each to fulfil their potential where they feel secure and have a sense of belonging. Continuing Care is an opportunity to plan in a gradual way, increasing independence at a rate and stage that suits the evolving capacity of the young person. The aim of this provision is to provide continuing care to Young People supporting them on to independence.

Contact Details

Essential Addresses and Contact Details

Registered Manager: Claire Devine

The NFA office address is:
National Fostering Agency
1st floor
East Gateway
Beancross Road
Grangemouth
FK3 8WH
Tel: 01324 468 055

Care Inspectorate

Scotland National Office,
Care Inspectorate
Compass House,
Discovery Quay
11 Riverside Drive,
Dundee,
DD1 4NY
0345 600 9527

Coram VOICE

This is a national charity that enables and equips children and young people to hold to account the services that are responsible for their care. They uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

Helpline: 0808 800 5792

Email: info@coramvoice.org.uk

Web: www.coramvoice.org.uk



“We are part of National Fostering Group. By supporting foster parents to create safe, secure, nurturing environments, we help vulnerable children and young people to thrive and settle into education, giving them the great start in life they deserve.”

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