



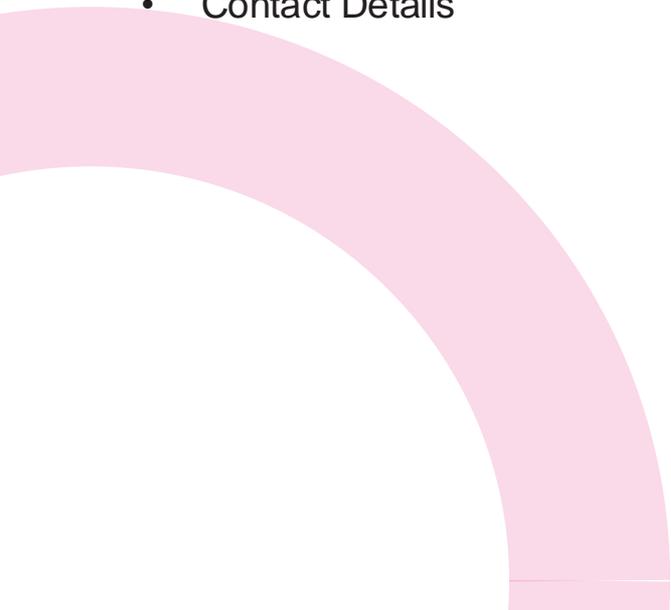
Statement of Purpose

NFA - London North

URN Number: 2677721

April 2025

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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose for National Fostering Agency (NFA) London North has been developed and produced to meet the requirements of the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4: fostering Services (2011)
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Assessment & Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations, Volume 4 Fostering Services (July 2013)
- Children and Families Act 2014

This Statement of Purpose is submitted to Ofsted. It is provided and made available to employees, foster parents, local authorities, children and young people placed and their parents via our website

A hard copy can be provided if requested. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed and agreed annually by the Registered Manager and the Senior Management Team.

National Fostering Agency London North provides a service to children and young people and their foster carers across the North of river Thames in London, covering the region from East to West.

All the activities by NFA London North are inspected and regulated by Ofsted:
Registered Number: 2677721

Name and Address of Responsible Individual

Neil McCarthy
Regional Director
National Fostering Group
Atria
Spa Road
Bolton
BL1 4AG

Neil.McCarthy@nfa.co.uk

Name and Address of Registered Manager

Rebecca Askew
Agency Manager (Ofsted Registration in progress)
NFA London North
Waterside House
20 Riverside Way
Uxbridge
UB8 2YF

Rebecca.Askew@nfa.co.uk



Company Status

Senior Management Team (SMT) Objectives

National Fostering Agency London North reports to the National Fostering Group Executive Team and the Senior Management Teams.

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 Area Manager day-to-day 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 day-to-day 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.



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 placed with us.

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 Ofsted and copies of inspection reports are available via the Ofsted website. 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 fostered 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 fostered 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 fostered children placed 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 fostered children 365 days a year

- To value diversity and promote equality, by recognising the importance of fostered 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 fostered child's sense of identity and self-worth
- To promote the fostered child's health and wellbeing, including their physical, mental and emotional welfare
- To promote the fostered child's educational attendance, achievement, attainment, with the aim of their potential being reached
- To promote and support the fostered child's important relationships, to include agreed contact with their family and friends, in accordance with their care plan
- To prepare fostered children for age-appropriate independence
- To seek the views, wishes and opinions of fostered children and to promote their participation in activities alongside their families and foster parents
- To provide learning opportunities to Foster Parents that enables them to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding to better meet the needs of the fostered children they are caring for
- To offer foster placements that carefully consider and match the needs of the fostered child to the foster parent's skills and experience
- To support the stability of foster placements and minimise the damaging effects of unplanned endings for fostered children and foster families
- To maintain the skill and knowledge base of staff and managers 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 and continuous learning

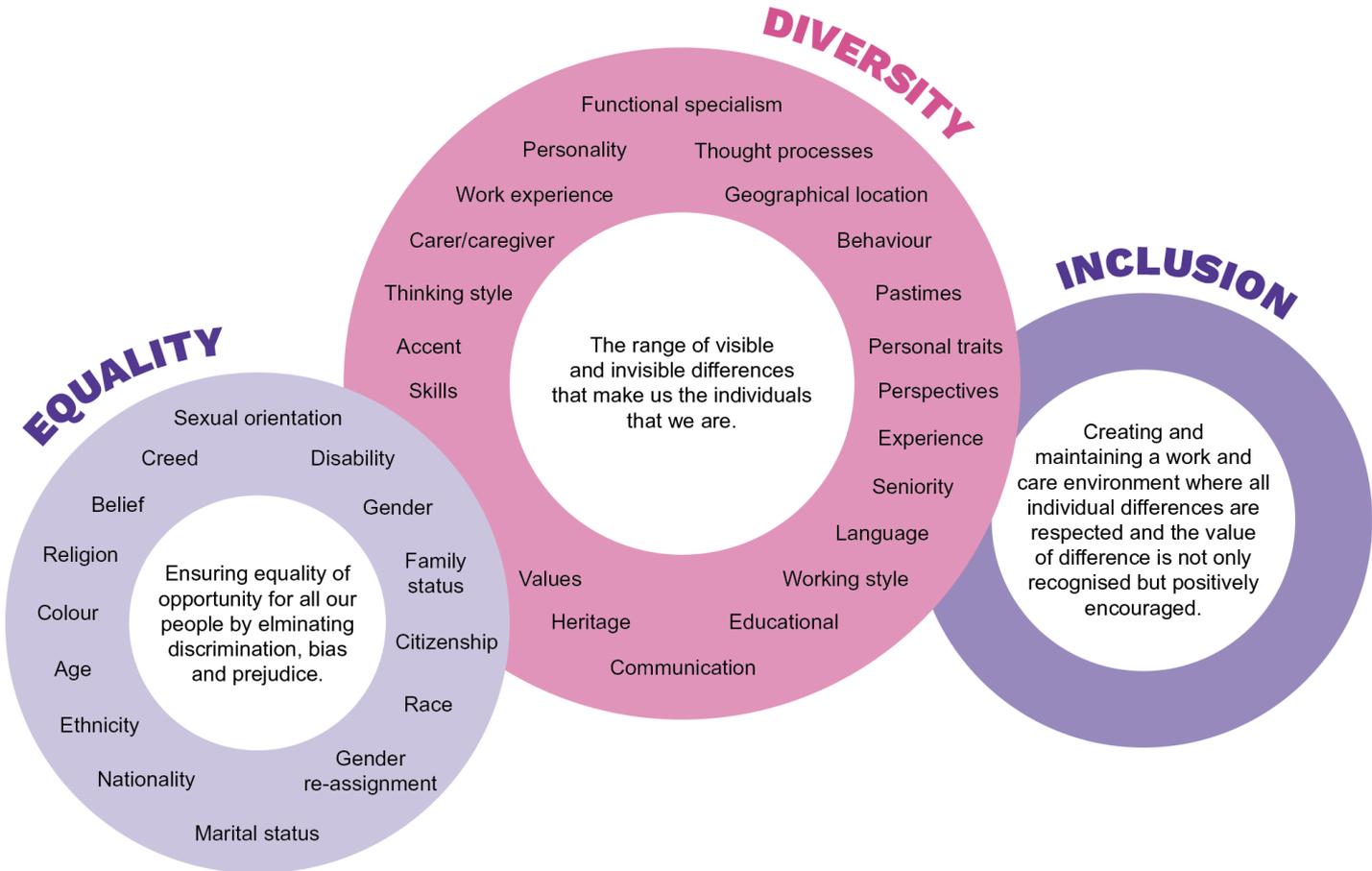
Commitment to Equality and Diversity

At **NFA London North** 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.

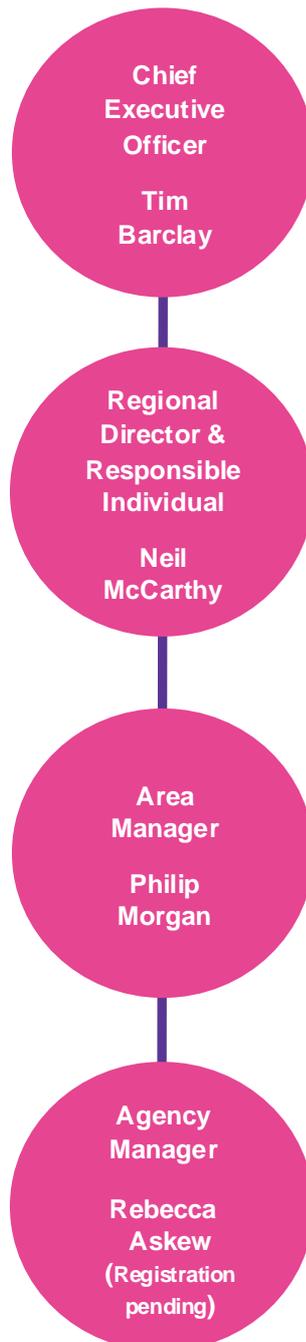
We are committed to supporting our foster families and staff team to reach their full potential as individuals, unimpeded by discrimination or unfairness.

At **NFA London North** 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.



Management and Regional Team Structure

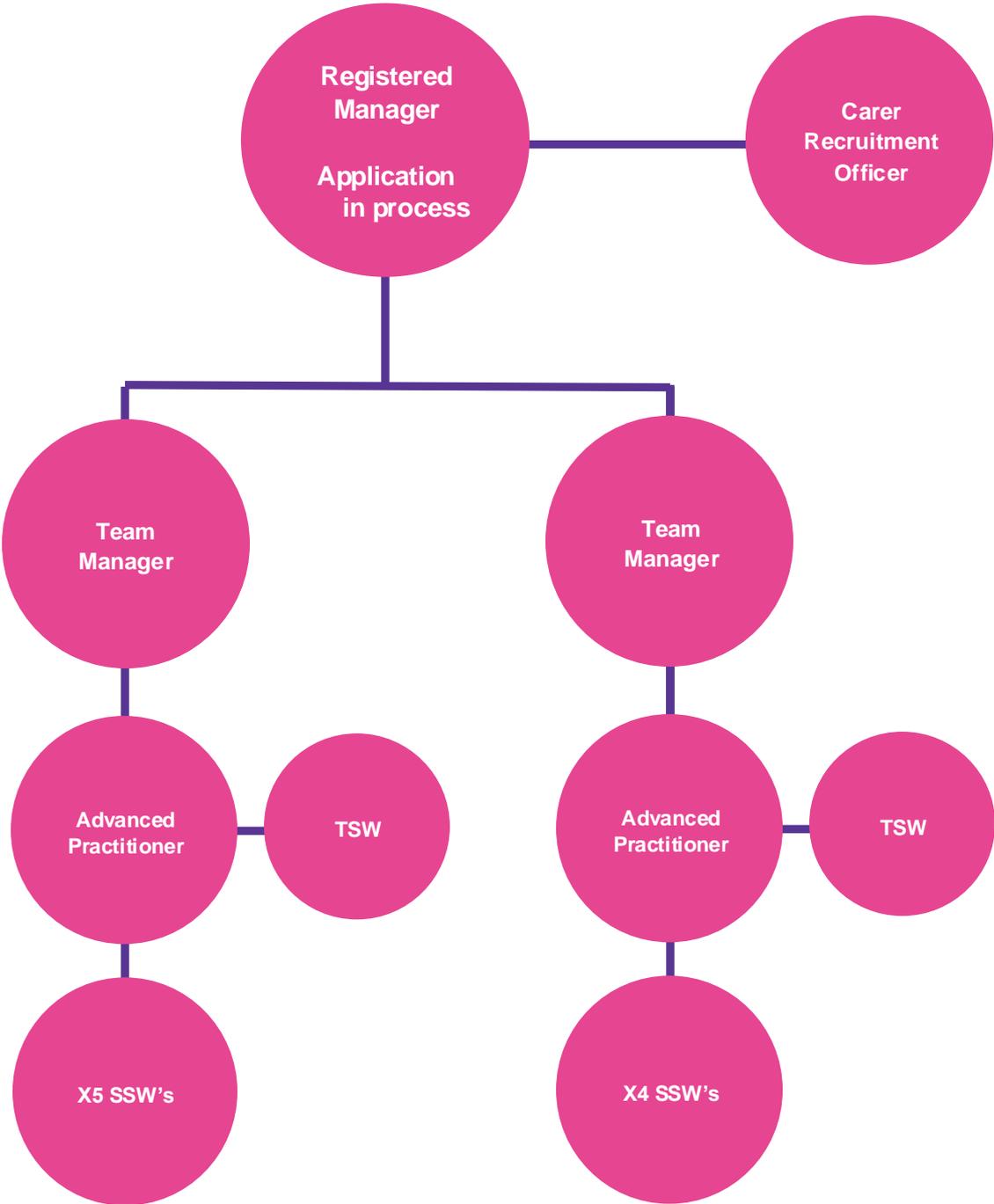
Management Structure



Management and Regional Team Structure

Team Structure

- SSW: Supervising Social Worker
- TSW: Team Support Worker



Management and Regional Team Structure

The Staff Team

The registered office is based in Uxbridge and the service covers a wide geographical area across the whole of North London as well as parts of Buckinghamshire, Slough, Kent and Surrey.

The Supervising Social Workers & Support Team, and Carer Recruitment Officer can work remotely to ensure that we meet the needs of our families. All our Social Workers hold recognised professional social work qualifications and are registered with Social Work England.

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.

The Regional Director supervises the Area 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 Area Manager

The Area Manager has overall lead responsibility for ensuring the agency achieves good and aspires for outstanding outcomes for children and young people and takes full responsibility for the service delivery to children, young people, their carers and families, in line with legislation, guidance, group and local policy and procedures.

The Area Manager line manages the Registered Manager and the linked referrals team, providing monthly management supervision to both managers

Works in liaison with the quality team and registered manager to audit, monitor and maintain full compliance with regulations and standards, addressing audit findings and implementing audit action plans

The Registered Manager

The Registered Manager (Ofsted application in process) is responsible for the overall operation of the agency, including the supervision of the Team Managers 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. The Registered Manager ensures that all practice is in accordance with agency policy and national legislation and frameworks.

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 Managers

The Team Managers have line management and supervisory responsibility for the agency's Supervising Social Workers. The Team Managers oversee the day-to-day support offered to the agency's Foster Carers and fostered children and makes case decisions accordingly as part of this. The Team Managers oversee the matches undertaken when fostered children are 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.

Supervising Social Workers (SSWs)

The SSWs have responsibility for the 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 placed with in our Foster Families. SSWs are responsible for monitoring the continuous professional development and training of foster carers, and they ensure that all foster carers meet the statutory training and development requirements, to ensure our families are equipped to support the children that come to our service.



Management and Regional Team Structure

In addition, SSWs co-ordinate and deliver support groups for foster carers and provide the frontline delivery of our Out of Hours Service.

Team Support Worker

Our Team Support Workers (TSW) 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 contact 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, our assessment service 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 manage all incoming referrals and keyworking relationships with Local Authority placements teams in order to identify potential foster placements for looked after children. The Referrals Hub liaises with foster carers and works closely with our Supervising Social Workers and Managers to ensure that good

matching takes place by qualified social work staff; coordinating all arrangements through to the child being welcomed by their new Foster carers.

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

Office Administrators

Office Administrators have responsibility for maintaining the relevant checks for foster carers, adult household members and their support network e.g., DBS, 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 and Psychotherapists 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. The focus of much of the work for clinicians in fostering is on supporting Foster 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, strengthen relationships in the home and support stability.

To achieve this, Clinicians offer consultations with Supervising Social Workers and Foster Parents to develop understanding of families and children and develop next steps. Direct work with children can also be provided where this is needed. In addition, support groups with carers and reflective practice sessions with Supervising Social Workers can be offered to support their therapeutic approach.

These are examples of what can be offered; at other times, a more extensive assessment may be needed for the child which can be arranged by agreement. 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 Foster Carers, Supervising Social workers and other professionals involved with the family to offer a full multi-disciplinary wrap-around approach.

Services Provided by the Agency

NFA London North works closely with a number of Local Authorities to understand their specific needs relating to foster placements 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. The types of placement provided are:

Emergency

Many of our foster families can provide unplanned emergency placements 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 respite placements either on a regular basis or one-off holiday breaks.

Short term

Short term foster placements 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 short-term foster placement 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 placements with Foster Parents who are experienced in bridging children to adoption, permanence or independence. Bridging placements form 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 Placements

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

Sibling Placements

Many of our Foster Parents have the skill, experience and accommodation to care for large sibling groups, 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 of our Foster Parents have developed the skills and experience for providing placements to fostered children who are unaccompanied from overseas, enabling these children to settle and engage in education and positive family experiences.

Staying Put

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 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 placement 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 placement providing clinical assessment and therapeutic support directly for the child and foster carer/s. With a dynamic training package, Invictus aims to equip foster carers with the knowledge to build on exiting skills.

Matching

Matching fostered 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 placement stability and provide fostered children and foster families with positive outcomes.

At NFA London North we recognise that fostered children are individuals, with a diverse range of experiences, needs, and talents, we require Foster 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's needs with those Foster Parents who have the best possible experience, knowledge, skill set, and approach to meet their needs.

NFA London North will not propose a placement 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 foster child's known and potential future needs and care plan. Foster Parents are fully involved in the matching process will ultimately make the final decision in conjunction with their allocated Supervising Social Worker and the Team Manager as to whether, or not, they can robustly meet the needs of the child and offer the fostered child a placement in their home.



NFA London North also offers an emergency placement service outside normal working hours. Referrals in these instances will be managed by one of the agency's Supervising Social Workers, in conjunction with a Manager on duty, 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 placements. 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 part of the National Fostering Group, NFA London North 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

NFA London North 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.

Support for Children in our Care

The children placed with NFA London North 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, NFA London North has established a clear online manual of policies and procedures that outlines the standards expected from all foster carers and staff.

Placement planning meetings are held as soon as possible following a young person arriving in placement. Where possible the young person is supported to participate in this meeting and contribute to the placement plan, which sets out clear expectations for the placement.

All children and young people placed will receive a copy of the Children's Guide at the time of placement 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 fostered child on a regular basis to ascertain their views and hear about their experiences of life in their foster family. During these visits the Supervising Social Worker will also view 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.

Physical Environment

NFA London North pride themselves on the standard of their foster families 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 child's Placing Authority has given permission for them to share (in the case of siblings 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 have annual health and safety assessments on an annual basis, and the home environment is also routinely monitored through monthly supervisory visits.

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 Placement Plan, and incorporated within their risk assessment, which is completed at the commencement of the placement.

Policies on supporting positive behaviour 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, we establish the individual health needs of each child in our care. Wherever possible fostered 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

NFA London North has policies on keeping, administering, and the recording of medication which each foster carer 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 Placement 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 and healthy diet.
- 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

We 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 placed 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 place or can source bespoke educational packages at additional costs.

Relationships and Family Time with Parents and Relatives

NFA London North 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 Placement Plan/Care Plan. We would expect to be informed of any changes by the child's Local Authority. Transport to and from contact 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 placement) 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, the agency looks 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 their ongoing relationships with their children.

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

NFA London North 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 fostered child (where possible).

Where children are taking risks or there are safety concerns, the agency regularly reviews incidents and agency support to promote safety and stability.

Consultation and Support for Children and Young People

Outcomes Support – 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 NFA London North, 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.

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

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

Carer Recruitment, Assessment and Approval

Recruitment

NFA London North 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 recruit's 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

NFA London North website provides prospective carers with information, case examples and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help them make informed choices about fostering with the 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, contact
- 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

The agency recognises that foster carers have choices and that in some instances decisions are made to move between approving agencies. In these circumstances the Fostering Network Transfer Protocol is 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. 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 DBS, 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 Foundation 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, experience and valuing diversity. The report will make recommendations on the terms of approval e.g., number of children, age range, placement types, 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 members, with experience 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 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 assessor will inform applicants of this decision and the reasons within 48 hours and present a brief report for consideration by the fostering panel.

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

Each fostering household will have an annual foster carer review (AFCR), unless there are significant changes to their circumstances in which case, an earlier review will be conducted. These circumstances could include:

- After the final strategy meeting of a Section 47 investigation involving a carer(s)
- Where serious allegations have been made regarding a carer(s) childcare practice and no Section 47 investigation is pursued
- Where there has been a relationship breakdown in the approved carers' relationship resulting in one carer moving out of the household. In this instance, both carers will be subject to review except where one or both carers have given notice of an intention to resign
- Where a carer has started living with a new partner
- Where there have been significant changes to the carers' lifestyle
- Where a carer has been diagnosed with a serious illness
- Where there has been the death of a carer
- Where a carer is not working in partnership with the agency, including a lack of engagement and attendance with training and continued professional development

The Supervising Social Worker is required to prepare a detailed report for the AFCR, in consultation with the foster carers. The report will seek and take into account feedback from the child/young person, their Social Worker, school, other professionals involved in the child's care, including birth family (if appropriate). In addition, it should include the views of the carer's own children too, in particular those residing in the fostering household. The report should cover how the carers' have met and progressed the outcomes for children and provide a clear picture of how the carer works with children and young people in their care.

The AFCR provides an opportunity for both the agency and foster carer to reflect on the past year, and plan for the year ahead; this includes a full review of the individual carer's training and development needs, detailing any actions for the year ahead. The report makes a clear recommendation regarding continued approval, or any changes to the terms of approval, including the rationale and evidence to support those changes.

Following the Carers initial approval, the carers' first Annual Review report will be presented back to the Fostering Panel for their oversight. All review recommendations are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for the final decision about the Foster Carers ongoing approval and carers are notified, in writing, of those decisions.



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 placement plan.

NFA London North 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 placement
- 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 children in placement

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 placement. 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 regular supervision 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 supervision meeting is twofold. The first part of the meeting 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 meeting should concentrate on the child's plans, achievements and development. Supervising Social Workers will carry out two unannounced visits each year and undertake a Health and Safety Check of the home 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 the 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:

- Respite (of varying duration)
- Day Care
- Structured activities
- Contact 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 in placement.

Supervision and Support of Foster Carers

Events

At NFA London North we hold a wide variety of events to support carers with 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

NFA London North 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

NFA London North 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

NFA London North 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 and Psychotherapists with experience of working with families and with children with histories of trauma including neglect, violence, and abuse. They bring 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 can offer consultations with Supervising Social Workers and foster carers to inform their care giving approach. 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. On occasion a more extensive assessment may be needed for the child which with agreement can be arranged. 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

NFA London North 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.

Foster carers have a Personal Development Plan which is reviewed as part of ongoing supervision and annual appraisal.

Foundation to Foster Training

The journey usually begins with the Foundation 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

Foundation 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

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.

NFA London North understands the need for Foster Carers and staff to respond appropriately to complex needs and the impact of developmental trauma in young people. Therapeutic Parenting training is mandatory for carers and staff, as we strive to be a trauma informed organisation.

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.

Mandatory Courses

As part of ongoing Learning and Development, there are a number of courses carers must complete

- Foundation To Foster
- Introduction To Therapeutic Parenting
- First Aid For Foster Carers
- Safeguarding Foundation (Children's)
- De-escalation
- Safer Use Of Medication
- Record Keeping (For Foster Carers)
- Safer Caring
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Training And Development Standards Portfolio

Essential Development Courses by Foster Carers

- FGM –An Introduction
- Online Safety and Cyberbullying
- Prevent
- Therapeutic Parenting Foundation
- Think Spot Speak Out

Further development & recommended courses to support carers in their roles are available on the SHINE platform

Finance

NFA London North Foster Carers receive a weekly fostering allowance paid directly into their bank account and a level of this allowance is dependent on the type/complexity of care provided. In addition, all carers also receive a maintenance payment covering clothing, pocket money, birthday and seasonal allowances for the child/ young person placed. Foster carers are also paid a holiday allowance equivalent to two weeks fostering allowance.

Savings for children in care are deducted at source and saved in individual accounts administered by the NFA Group.

Detailed information and guidance on rates and allowances are made available to each foster carer. All foster carers are provided with an Annual Statement of their earnings.

Foster Carers are self-employed and must seek their own advice on liability for Income Tax and National Insurance. This can be accessed through the Fostering Network, of which membership is funded for all foster carers by the NFA Group.

Local Authorities should directly contact the agency for information pertaining to our charges for the different types of foster carers and support services offered.

The agency's finances are subject to annual financial audit



Complaints

NFA London North complaints procedures aim to deal with complaints received in a prompt and equitable manner. The Registered Manager and the Quality Assurance Manager are responsible for monitoring complaints and their outcomes.

Complaints Policy

All children and adults with whom the company comes into contact have the right to receive a quality, professional service. If they do not feel they have received such a service, they have the right to complain and have that complaint listened to.

All complaints will be acknowledged within seven working days and will indicate whether it is resolvable at Stage 1 or will require Stage 2 investigation.

Stage 1 Complaints – Informal Resolution

Where possible, we aim to resolve complaints informally, at local level, and this should be the preferred option. Complainants are encouraged to talk to the person with whom they have a complaint with in the first instance as this allows opportunity to explore the issue and seek any clarification, which often leads to informal resolution. Where this is not possible, a meeting will be convened between the complainant and the line manager of the person/s being complained about. A letter of resolution will be issued by the Registered Manager detailing how the outcome was arrived at. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, or at the outset they require the matter to be dealt with by another employee of the National Fostering Group; they will be asked to write to the Registered Manager who will contact the complainant within seven working days to advise that the Quality Assurance Manager has been instructed to investigate the complaint.

Stage 2 Complaints – Formal Consideration

The QA Manager will undertake a formal investigation and provide a written response within 21 days outlining the outcome of the investigation. The Registered

Manager will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the report, where necessary and appropriate.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the QA report, they must confirm the reasons for their dissatisfaction, in writing, to the Registered Manager who will arrange for the complaint to be reviewed independently within 28 days.

Stage 3 Complaints – Independent Review

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 or 2, and the reasons for this are made clear in writing; the complaint will proceed to Stage 3 for independent review. This is often conducted by the Director of Quality Assurance or other Senior Director, allowing 28 days for investigation and every effort will be made to achieve complaint resolution. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may take advice from the Regulatory Authority.

Name and Address of Inspection Body

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

- Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
- General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231
- About Concerns: 0300 123 4666
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner

Children and Young People may also make a complaint to the Children's Commissioner, based in England. They can do this by going to the appropriate website:

- www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk (for England)

Complaints

Support

It is the policy of the NFA London North to make its complaint procedures accessible, effective, fair and independent as possible.

Sometimes children and adults need help and support to make a complaint. The child may have support from his or her parent, social worker, Independent Visitor or foster carer.

A child who wishes to make a complaint about any aspects of his or her care should receive assistance to access independent advice and support from their Independent Reviewing Officer. Any complaint made by a Looked After Child will also be referred to a recognised advocacy service if the child wishes.

Foster carers may enlist the help of a supporter or advocate or their Supervising Social Worker, as appropriate, to make a complaint about the agency under this policy or where appropriate, about the placing authority under the relevant local authority's complaints procedure.

Allegations of abuse

If any complaint is made to any employee of NFA London North that is clearly of a child protection nature that complaint will be immediately passed on to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the responsible authority and Ofsted will be informed.

If at any time during an investigation into a complaint it becomes clear that there may be child protection implications, the current investigation will be halted and the relevant Local Authority LADO will be notified immediately, the responsible authority and Ofsted will be informed.

Where a complaint is made against the Registered Manager, the complaint will be investigated by the Regional Director.



Professional Membership

CoramBAAF

As a partner agency of the National Fostering Group,

NFA London North 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 professions, 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, NFA London North has a corporate membership with NWG which a network tackling child sexual exploitation is 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.

Contact Details

Essential Addresses and Contact Details

Children's Commissioner

Address:
Children's Commissioner for England,
sanctuary Buildings,
Great Smith Street,
London,
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Free and confidential contact lines for children and young people:
Tel: 0800 528 0731
Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

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

OFSTED

NFA London North is regulated and inspected by Ofsted

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

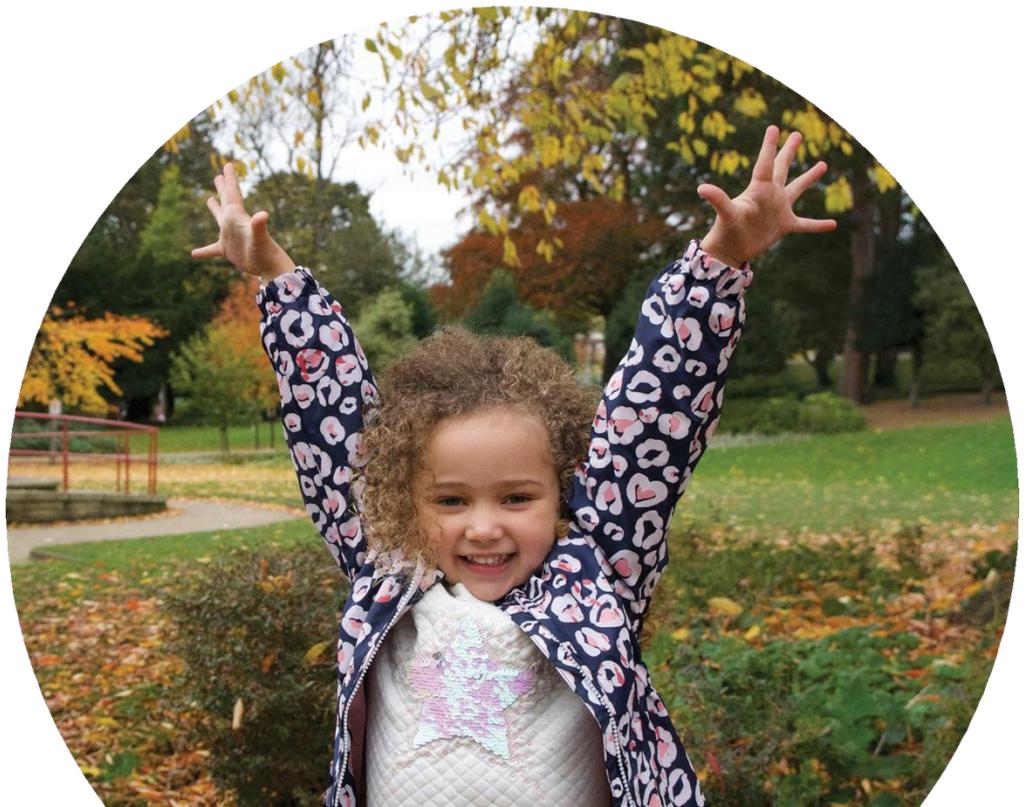
Tel: 0300 123 1231

General Enquiries Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

NFA London North

Agency Manager
NFA London North
Waterside House
20 Riverside Way
Uxbridge
UB8 2YF

Tel: 01895 200300
Email: UxbridgeAdmin@nfa.co.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.”

NFA London North

Waterside House | 19 Riverside Way | Uxbridge | London | UB8 2YF
1894 200300 | UxbridgeAdmin@nfa.co.uk | www.nfa.co.uk/national-fostering-agency/



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