

KIRKLEES PLACEMENT PERMANENCE AND SUPPORT SERVICE - FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(regs.3 & 4 Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)

The role of Foster Carer is vitally important for children who, for a wide range of reasons, require to be cared outside of their immediate families. The recruitment of, and support to Foster Carers, is a core activity for Kirklees Council, and one which must be undertaken with great care, commitment and professionalism. I am pleased to be able to endorse this updated Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service, which spells out the expectations which we have of both ourselves, and of those special people who choose to become foster carers. We may not always get it right, but this Statement represents our aspirations to be the best that we can be. Providing a warm, supportive and truly caring environment for other people's children is a complicated and sometimes challenging task. The Council is committed to doing all that it can to support carers, in order that they experience the satisfaction of providing a home in which children and young people can become the best that they can be.

Elaine McShane
Service Director
Family Support & Child Protection

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1. Introduction

It is a requirement of the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services that each fostering agency produces a Statement of Purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided.

This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements, how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met and good outcomes achieved for all children in its care. It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide which is provided to all children, subject to the child's age and understanding at the point of placement. This statement is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is publicly available on our fostering website. We place great emphasis on working with children and their families to promote and maintain stability, safety and security for looked after children and young people in Kirklees.

2. National Legislative and Policy Framework

The statement of purpose also explains the facilities and services of the Fostering Service which are delivered in accordance with fostering legislation and regulatory frameworks including

- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and 2015
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- Foster Carer Charter 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 and 2015

- Children Act 1989
- Disability and Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers

We look to support our children's right to have a family life where they can form and maintain effective relationships, fulfil their potential and achieve the best possible outcomes within a stable, caring and encouraging environment.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually and is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is publicly available on our fostering website. A copy of this statement is accessible to Ofsted and the Kirklees Fostering Network. It is included in the Foster Carers' Handbook.

3. Structure of the Service

Director for Children and Young People

Mel Meggs

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Service Director, Family Support & Protection Services

Elaine McShane

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Head of Corporate Parenting

Steve Comb

Service Manager Placement Permanence & Support Service

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Team Managers – Placement Permanence & Support service

3.1 Where to find us

- The Director is based on the 1st Floor, Civic Centre 3, High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2YZ.
- The Service Director is based at the Civic Centre 3, High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2NF
- The Fostering Service is based within the Placement Permanence & Support Service, Ground Floor, Civic Centre 1, High Street, HD1 2NF. The telephone number is 01484 221000 and the email address is family.placement@kirklees.gov.uk.
- Based on this site are the Duty and Advice Service, the Assessment and Intervention Service, the Looked after Children and Care Leavers Service and we are co-located with One Adoption West Yorkshire.

3.2 Facilities

- The building has a shared main reception for all services. There is a shared telephone number/switch board.
- The Office is open from 8.45 – 5.15 Monday – Thursday, 8.45 – 4.45 Friday.
- There is ample public parking available within walking distance and access to the building for people with a disability.
- An answer phone service is available out of office hours. There is also a free phone service for fostering enquiries on 0800 389 0086.
- Information and enquiries about fostering can be made via the web site at www.kirklees.gov.uk/fostering or go to Kirklees Council and type in Fostering. .
- The Emergency Duty Service provides an out of hours service for contact in an emergency on 01484 414933.
- There is also Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) who provide a 24/7 Service, 365 days a year dedicated support service for carers.

4. Aims

- To provide safe, quality placements with foster carers for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their health and general well-being.
- To recruit foster carers who can meet the assessed needs of the children requiring placement and who reflect the cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic background of the children placed with them.
- To assist Looked after Children and Care Leaving young people within Kirklees to improve their life chances and outcomes.
- For most children and young people who become Looked After, a fostering placement will be the first choice of placement unless an assessment indicates that a particular child's needs cannot be met in this way.
- To assess and where appropriate, approve relatives or close family friends as foster carers for children of all ages where this is seen to be in the best interest of the child. These are referred to as 'Connected Carers'.
- To recruit foster carers where children can be sufficiently close to their homes to enable them to retain important links with family, school, or friends.
- To ensure that a child's physical and emotional health needs are met and that a positive healthy lifestyle is encouraged for each child. The Placement Support Team is a multi-agency team with access to CAMHS Practitioners who work directly with foster carers and looked after children to achieve positive mental, psychological and emotional health.
- To ensure that all our children are achieving to the highest standard educationally. Our foster carers receive support and guidance from the Virtual Headteacher and dedicated practitioners within the virtual school.

4.1 Objectives

- To ensure that there is a choice of high quality foster care placements available to meet the complex and diverse needs of individual children and young people.
- A Supervising Social Worker from the Placement Permanency and Support Service is allocated for each carer and is responsible for ensuring that the care offered is of a high standard.
- Carers are treated as fellow professionals and are an important part of the team. Payment levels reflect their skill and experience.
- If children have to be placed with carers who do not reflect their background, carers and children will be given the support and advice to enable them to retain their identity.
- Annual reviews of carers are used to evaluate their experiences, skills and any required changes to their profiles.
- Regular audits identify any gaps in provision and the marketing strategy enables the Service to target and prioritise the areas of greatest need.
- Regular feedback is obtained from all of our looked after young people. This can be through the Children's Rights service and they are encouraged to contribute to the foster carer review process.
- We work to an equal opportunities framework and expect all of our carers to embrace diversity and work in an anti-discriminatory manner.
- Regular meetings take place between Management and representatives from the Kirklees Fostering Network. This allows us to work in partnership in order to continually improve the service.
- All foster carers are members of the National Fostering Network which is funded by Kirklees. They receive up to date information about the national developments in fostering and also have access to support and advice if required.
- There are clear safeguarding procedures for the investigation of any allegations against a carer and these are set out in the Foster Carer handbook. Independent support is also available from the Fostering Network.

- The staff within the Service are qualified, experienced in working with children, committed to developing a quality service, and receive regular supervision and annual appraisal.
- A commitment to continuous improvement through the provision of wider placement choices for children by pioneering more innovative approaches to foster care that are needs led, delivering flexible packages of support to children in public care
- Payments to foster carers should be at a level that will support recruitment and retention strategies. Foster carers should be appropriately rewarded for their time and commitment in line with their skills, identified in their approval profile.

5. Principles and Standards of Care

Kirklees Fostering Service is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest standards and offering quality provision. It has been developed and is managed in accordance with the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and the principles outlined in the National Minimum Standards 2011. These standards apply equally to our kinship carers.

- The principles and core values within the Fostering Service are driven by improving the life chances for all our looked after children and Care Leavers.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Every child looked after will be cared for in an environment free from oppression, discrimination and prejudice, encouraging them to develop a positive sense of their own identity
- Every child who is looked after will have a safe care plan, health plan and a personal education plan.
- A child centred approach is central to the recruitment and training of carers and in making placements. The child's needs in relation to ethnicity, culture, language, gender and disability are taken into account.
- Children who are looked after are consulted regarding their wishes and feelings in regard to all aspects of their care. They will be provided with a Children's Guide to Fostering.

- The service aims to make a range of foster carers available to ensure that placements to be well-matched and to thereby minimise the moves children may

6. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

Foster carers are provided with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on carers and looked after children who are subject to National Standards and Data protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

7. Children's Guide

Subject to the child's age and understanding, the fostering service ensures the child receives the Children's Guide at the point of becoming looked after. The foster carer will explain the contents of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible. The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, who is involved in looking after them and how they can find out their rights. It will also provide a child with details of their Social Worker, their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted along with their contact details.

Kick Website

- The local authority has a website for young people (KICK) which allows them to rate the care which they receive and comment on any foster home which they have experienced. The website also contains the opportunity to rate other services which they receive as looked after children.
- A Team Manager in the Fostering Team is informed of any comments and able to access any feedback about the fostering which can then be used to improve the service of any individual or family
- Compliments are shared with the individual families if the young person has moved on to another placement

- The website is promoted through children's reviews, and by the Children's Rights workers and by the foster carers who encourage them to use the site. Prizes are offered as an incentive for young people who use the site.

8. Services Provided

The fostering service approves foster carers to look after children aged 0-18 years.

Many of the children placed have experienced difficulties including abuse or neglect before being fostered. Some children and young people present with very challenging behaviour, special needs or complex health conditions. It does this by assessing, registering, supervising, supporting and training a wide range of carers.

Staff in the Fostering Service are responsible for the recruitment, training, supervision and support of all the foster carers who offer a range of placements.

All carers are provided with a range of training and are expected to complete the training, support and development (TSD) Workbook within the first year of approval and attend training which enables them to progress through the skills levels.

Different types of foster carers

Short-term:

Time limited placements which offer a child a temporary home whilst long term plans are considered.

Long term:

These are planned and permanent placements for a child. Long-term foster carers want to offer a permanent home to a child/young person until they reach an age where they can live independently.

Respite:

At times parents and carers require respite support which we aim to provide in a planned way.

Family and Friends Carers:

Family and friends can be approved as foster carers in order to care for a specific child. They are known as Connected Carers.

Short Breaks:

For children and young people with a disability whose families require a break from caring for them. Short breaks may include midweek or weekend overnight stays and/or a few days during the school holidays.

Parent and child:

Foster Carers provide assessments of a parent's ability to care for their child as part of an agreed plan.

9. Recruitment of foster carers

We have a dedicated Fostering Recruitment Team which comprises of 4 Fostering Advisors, 3 Assessing Social Workers, a Team Manager and dedicated Business Support. Team Members come from diverse backgrounds such as teaching and adoption support. Specialist marketing input is also embedded within the team structure.

A Marketing Strategy is in place to meet the current needs of the Fostering Service which is also in line with the Sufficiency Guidance from Government regarding the number of placements required in Kirklees. Recruitment is the core activity of this team and is targeted towards the changing needs of looked after children and service developments as required.

A range of recruitment activities are used to attract Foster Carers including adverts and articles and 'real life' stories from approved foster carers in the local press. Special events and information drop in sessions are held at different times of the year. Promoted posts on Facebook and council owned media, alongside various activities with the Kirklees Fostering Network. We are pro-active in developing links with the local community; including local businesses and schools.

Enquirers can contact the team online or via a Freephone telephone number. We are part of 'You can Foster' which is a regional collaboration where we obtain enquiries through their holding page. The fostering webpages are regularly reviewed and updated and include 'real life' experiences of our approved foster carers, anonymised profiles of children and brief outlines of the fostering process.

Interest is welcomed from all members of the community, regardless of relationship status, employment situation, class, gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity or religion.

Due to the demands of fostering it would usually be expected that applicants have sufficient life experience to carry out the required tasks. There may be exceptions to this rule when applicants are seeking to care for a specific child (family and friends care).

Smoking is discouraged and no one who smokes will be considered for children under the age of 5 or children of any age who have respiratory or heart problems. We can re-assess if the applicants have then given up for at least a year and would want to foster children under 5 years of age.

There is no upper age limit, but all applicants must be sufficiently healthy and active to be able to offer care to a child.

There is an immediate exclusion for anyone who has been convicted of an offence against a child or a serious offence against an adult.

All enquirers are able to speak to a Fostering Advisor within the Recruitment Team about their interest in fostering and to gain more information about becoming a foster carer. The Fostering Advisors run a Duty Service Monday to Friday during normal working hours.

An allocated Fostering Advisor will undertake an initial visit to discuss their interest and circumstances in more detail. On this visit any immediate issues may be identified which might preclude approval e.g. lack of space, medical issues or a specific criminal record are discussed in detail so that it can be recorded and considered as part of this mini assessment. All applicants need to demonstrate a level of literacy/language skills which will enable them to meet the required competencies. A short written piece of work is undertaken at this time to help identify any issues in this area.

The outcome of the Initial Visit is confirmed by letter, which will either contain the Essential Information Form (EIF) which is a formal application to proceed or they will receive a confirmation letter outlining the reasons why it is not appropriate to proceed. On the return of the EIF the Applicants will be invited to the Skills to Foster Training and be allocated a Fostering Advisor and a Social Worker who work alongside each other during the assessment process.

All applicants are required to attend the 'Skills to Foster' Initial Training prior to going to the Fostering Panel. These courses are run bimonthly and are based on the

National Fostering Network course, Skills to Foster. The groups take place for 3 days 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. usually over 2 consecutive Saturdays and one Sunday for prospective carers followed by a half day on the following Saturday (9.30 – 12.30) for the Portfolio Workshop. Carers undergoing assessment are provided with guidance by their Fostering Advisor to support them in completing their portfolio of evidence.

The areas covered are:

1. Why children come into care
2. The legal setting
3. Child development and understanding/managing behavior
4. Awareness of child protection/safer caring
5. Working with parents, social workers and other professionals
6. Moving children on

The purpose of this training is to help applicants understand the full range of tasks and requirements of foster carers. The course is underpinned by issues of equality and diversity which are considered throughout the course.

It is also an additional assessment tool whereby social workers and applicants consider whether fostering is right for them. It can help applicants to decide which type of fostering they are most suited to.

Social workers from the Recruitment and Supervisory Teams run the course along with other professionals in the field of child care, experienced foster carers and some looked after children.

Enquiries from members of the public interested in fostering are dealt by the Recruitment Team Duty during office hours in line with the other duty services that run within Fostering. There is a free- phone number 0800 389 0086, messages can also be taken and there is a text facility where members of the public can leave their contact details.

Enquiries may also be made through email to family.placement@kirklees.gov.uk and via the Kirklees Fostering Service website which contains information about the service.

10. Assessment and Approval Process

The applicants will also begin a 'Form F' assessment that includes the requirements laid down in Schedule 3 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards in Foster Care (2011), Assessment and approval of Foster Carers 2013 (amendments to Children Act 1989) and Schedule 4 of the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 (where children are fostered by relatives and friends).

All carers are subject to a number of statutory checks and references:

- Disclosure and Barring Checks on all members of the household over the age of 18
- Child Protection Checks
- Children Young People's Social Care ESCR check
- Department of Health Checks
- Two personal references
- In addition, interviews are conducted with grown up children and children living in the household

Foster carers are additionally asked to undertake:

- A full medical examination with their GP. (Applicants for short breaks are asked to complete a medical questionnaire which is sent to their G.P. for verification / comments)
- A work reference from present or previous employer
- To agree to the department making contact with any schools which their children attend to ascertain the school's view on their involvement / suitability
 - To agree to the department making contact with ex-partners regarding their application to foster
 - The majority of foster carers are subject to a competency based assessment. The depth of this assessment will depend on the role for which the carer is being assessed, with appropriateness and proportionality being the measure of this. All potential carers are invited to be fully involved in the assessment and to use self-completion sheets as a

tool to look at their competencies. The fostering service uses the CoramBAAF Form F foster carer assessment format for the completion of its assessments. The assessment will cover the following areas:

- Family Background and childhood including education
- Adult life including employment and previous relationships
- Personality and current relationships
- Household members (including children) and lifestyle
- Other children (including adults) and social/support network
- Caring for Children (Parenting Capacity)
- Working effectively with others
- Understanding identify and diversity
- Motivation and timing of application
- Preparation, training, expectations and the impact of Fostering
- Understanding of Safe Caring
- Own children

The assessment of a foster carer would take place in the applicant's home over a period of six to eight visits, plus reference interviews and interviewing other relevant parties. The assessing social worker would ensure that timelines, analysis of significant relationships, the family dynamics and characteristics of the foster carers underpin and inform the assessment.

The assessment focuses on the individual or individuals applying to become foster carers and their family. We make a detailed assessment and analysis of their past and present experiences, the skills and competencies which they would bring to their new role and help them to think about their reasons for applying to become foster carers.

We are committed to completing the Form F and bringing to Fostering Panel within 5 months of receiving their application form.

The Fostering Panel is made up of a cross section of people involved with or have knowledge of children and young people, which includes social workers, foster carers, a local councilor, education professional, medically trained individuals and other independent members.

The Panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting. The Agency Decision-Maker makes the

final decision taking into consideration the Panel's recommendation and applicants are notified within 48 hours of the decision being made.

Any appeals can be made within 28 days and may either make further representation to the fostering panel or have their assessment considered by the Independent Review Mechanism who in turn will make a recommendation back to the agency.

11. Assessment and approval process for Connected Carers

Connected Person's care is when a child lives full-time or most of the time with a relative or friend who isn't their parent, usually because their parents aren't able to care for them.

Connected Person's care is when a friend or family member becomes an official carer for a child. This can be under the guise of Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order or Connected Foster Care.

The assessment process can take anything between 8 – 16 weeks and follows the same process as the standard Form F. These assessments will be time limited as they are usually directed by the Courts.

A Connected Carer must have all the same checks as our mainstream Foster Carers including full DBS and medicals.

Applicants who wish to care for a specific child will have an initial short assessment called a viability. This is to determine the suitability of a prospective carer. If the viability has a positive outcome then we will progress to the 'full' assessment.

A thorough assessment of a Connected Person is then undertaken to ensure that they are suitable to meet the needs of a specific child. We consider their motivation to care, existing relationship with the child, parenting capacity and ability to manage relationships within the birth family. The voice of the child is at the centre of all our assessments and direct work with the child/children is undertaken to obtain their wishes and feelings.

Broad findings from research show that where children cannot live with their parents, they do best across a range of measures if they can live with family and

friends carers. Kirklees strive to offer our Looked after Children the opportunity to achieve permanence with a family member wherever this is deemed appropriate.

As with mainstream Foster Carers, our Connected applicants will be taken to the Kirklees Fostering panel in order to become approved Foster Carers for a specific child.

Connected Carers in Kirklees have a range of support opportunities available to them following their approval. There is a specialist Social Work team who can offer advice and guidance to any Connected Carer until the child reaches the age of 18. There are also regular support groups run by Kirklees and we have a commissioned worker from the Grandparents Plus charity to assist us in supporting our families.

12. Support, Supervision and Training of foster Carers

All foster carers have their own supervising social worker whose responsibility it is to offer supervision, support and guidance in all aspects of their role and ensure that foster placements comply with statutory requirements.

The Supervising Social Worker undertakes regular visits to the foster carer; usually every 6 weeks however this can vary for example, fortnightly for newly approved carers. At least one unannounced visit to the foster home is made every year. Visits are opportunities to discuss concerns, progress or difficulties in placement. The care offered to the child and significant events are recorded on the supervisory visit form with a copy signed and given to the carer.

Duty Service

- Social Workers from the Supervisory Teams run a Duty Service which is available from 8.45 am Monday – Thursday (8.45 am – 4.45pm Friday) and they respond to queries from carers if their worker is not available (annual leave/off work sick).
- If an urgent advice to carers is required outside of office hours, the Emergency Duty Service is available on 01924 326489. There is also a 24 hour help line which is run by experienced foster carers who can give advice and support to carers.

Records

All details regarding foster carers and records of contacts are held electronically.

The foster carers have a right to request to see their files and are encouraged to be aware of their content.

Records of supervisory visits are signed by foster carers and supervising worker. There may be some information that they are not entitled to have access to, in line with the Data Protection.

Foster carers are required to keep records on individual children using monthly record sheets and recording significant events or any health issues. Written guidance on how to complete these records is available and support/training is provided via the support groups and by supervising social workers.

Post Approval Training

The Service is committed to ongoing personal development for foster carers and provides a range of courses, some of which are run specifically for carers as well as other courses which are attended by other Social Care staff.

Carers are expected to continue to attend training as identified in their Personal Development Plan in order to progress up the skills payment levels. For carers who work this is sometimes difficult to fit around work schedules, however there are efforts to try to accommodate this by having some courses at weekends.

The following courses are mandatory, Safe Care, First Aid, Health and Hygiene Skills Development, Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect. If a couple are approved **both** must attend the first 3 courses above.

A number of foster carers have achieved NVQ 3 Caring for Children and Young People. Foster carers who have gained experience and completed foundation training are now put forward for the Level 3 Diploma in caring for Children and Young People.

A comprehensive list of training is offered each year. This is reviewed annually to take account of the changing needs of the service and requests from foster carers. Additionally, there are more training courses online which foster carers can access.

Foster Carers also have access to SCILS (Social Care Information and Learning Services) and EILS (Education Information and Learning Services), both of which offer online resource based courses. EILS is aimed at staff in Early Years and Child Care. There are approximately 30 Learning Sessions that can be accessed on topics such as coping with challenging behaviour; eating disorders and facilitating children's social and emotional development.

There are generic topics available on SCILS such as maintaining confidentiality: anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice and an introduction to fire protection.

Special arrangements can be made for carers who need specialist training in relation to a specific child. Carers may also be able to identify training from other sources which is relevant to their development. These can be considered on an individual basis.

For carers living outside of Kirklees, we have links with the authorities in which they live and arrangements can usually be made to link carers into training which is held locally.

Support Groups

The Kirklees Foster Carers' Network (KFN) have their own monthly support group. Sessions covering areas of interest identified by the foster carers. Some examples of the sessions the KFN has run are

- Children's Rights
- Role of the Youth Justice Team
- LAC Reviews
- Role of the Looked After Children's Health Team
- Tax benefits for carers.

The Supervisory Team also run monthly support groups to keep carers updated on service development and have a variety of guest speakers which look at different issues relating to the care of children.

Reviews

Foster carers are reviewed on an annual basis. This includes reports from the social worker of any children placed, the carers' own report, health and safety checklist, individual safe care policy, Professional Development Plan (training log) and report from their supervising social worker.

The Fostering Reviewing Officer chairs the annual review, commenting on the recommendations and any proposed changes to the carers' profile. Foster carers' first annual review post approval will be presented to Fostering Panel who will make a recommendation regarding their re approval. Changes to the carer's profile or where a foster carer has been subject to an allegation or serious complaint will be presented to Panel.

The Agency Decision Maker considers reviews in line with the Fostering Regulations.

Termination of approval

Foster Carers are required to give twenty-eight days' notice in writing if they wish to terminate their approval. This takes effect 28 days after receipt by the Fostering Service and cannot be retracted. Resignations are presented to Fostering Panel as part of their quality assurance function.

The Fostering Panel considers all terminations which are recommended by the Fostering Service. In the event of a termination which is recommended by the Fostering Service the carers can attend Panel to put their point of view as well as providing a separate report. The Panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

The carer(s) have twenty-eight days to appeal either back to Kirklees or to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism if they disagree with the decision

The Agency Decision-Maker makes the final decision

Policies and Procedures

The staff group has access to an electronic procedural manual for the Children and Young People Service, accessible via the Council's intranet.

Foster carers have access to an electronic handbook which provides them with information relating to the task and role of the foster carer, policies and procedures of the fostering service and general information regarding relevant to fostering.

13. Placement Support Team and the provision of therapeutic Services

The team is made up of 1 Community Care Officer, 4 Senior Social Work Practitioners, 2 Senior Mental Health Practitioners, a Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist and a Clinical Psychologist.

The Placement Support Team aims to support the positive emotional and psychological development of children and young people. The team is multi-disciplinary in nature and includes clinicians employed by Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services working alongside Social Workers.

The Placement Support Team deliver regular consultation clinics facilitated by either the team's Clinical Psychologist or Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist in conjunction with a Senior Mental Health Practitioner and experienced Social Worker / Community Care Officer. The clinics provide a protected space for those working with children and young people (who are receiving social care support) to consider both their strengths and needs including the likely impact of trauma upon their development.

The team undertake both direct and indirect work with children who are cared for by the Local Authority. This includes the provision of support to Foster Carers and, where appropriate, direct work with the young person concerned. The team are able to implement a varied range of interventions dependent upon the needs identified and actions agreed during the consultation process.

Psychotherapeutic services are typically in depth pieces of work and as such tend to be offered to children who are living within their fostering families on a long term basis or to support them when they are making the transition to live as part of a long term fostering or adoptive family. The Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist often

undertakes work with the child's carers initially before moving on to provide direct support to the child or children. The aim of this is to try and ensure that the child has access to a sound foundation of support both during and following the therapeutic process.

The Clinical Psychologist within the team also implements support for both carers and children aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing and placement stability. Carers have reported that they find this useful as it helps them to develop their understanding of the children within their family which in turn, increases their nurturing caring capacity and resilience.

Additionally, the Clinical Psychologist facilitates regular clinical supervision sessions for staff working in residential care homes within the authority. This includes providing regular drop in sessions whereby young people who are living in these settings are able to access psychological support.

From a social work perspective practitioners within the team are able to tailor their work to be responsive to the needs of the carers and the child alike. The team's Social Workers often work with carers to help them to understand the journey of the child that they are caring for. This may include helping carers to understand a child's chronological experiences and reflect upon the impact that this has upon the child's view of the world and their relationships with others. The team are able to provide advice regarding therapeutic parenting strategies and offer carers a safe and supportive space to share any difficulties that they may be experiencing. This support is made available to carers through both group training and individual support sessions.

The Social Work Practitioners within the team also undertake direct work with children to promote their emotional wellbeing. This may include (but is not limited to) support to understand their life story and explore their understanding of their feelings and how these may affect them.

The Senior Mental Health Practitioner within the team is employed by Northorpe Hall Child and Family Trust, a charity that supports children's mental and emotional health within Kirklees. They are able to provide a fast track service for children who are cared for by Kirklees to access counselling, mentor support and confidence building activities.

Whilst the team has formed part of the Fostering Service for a number of years it is consistently evolving to meet the needs of the children and carers whom it is designed to support. Practitioners within the team are committed to undertaking progressive

practice development to ensure effective service delivery and partnership working across the continuum of children's services.

14. Additional services provided to our Looked After Children

Health

Children who are 'Looked After' are prioritised for a service by CAMHS. Any referrals to Core or Specialist CAMHS can be facilitated through the Kirklees Emotional Wellbeing Clinic.

Co-located within the Looked after Children and Care Leavers Service are a Designated Nurse, Specialist Nurse for Children with Complex Health Needs and a Specialist Nurse for Care Leavers. The team also has a Looked after Children's Designated Doctor/Consultant Pediatrician and a Pediatrician, based on another site.

The health team is available daily for advice, support and signposting. Training is also provided to Foster Carers and they are available to attend foster carer network meetings.

Six monthly or annual health assessments are organised through the LAC health team and are carried out by LAC Health Team or their colleagues in Health Visiting and School Nursing.

Virtual School

This team is based in the Learning Service, overseen by the Virtual Head Teacher for Looked after Children. The focus is the Educational Needs of Looked after Children. Their role is to advise social workers and foster carers on educational matters e.g. arrange extra input /tuition for children.

Specific training courses are run for foster carers on the educational needs of Looked after Children, Appeals procedure, etc.

Team Members are involved in close liaison with schools that have a Looked after Child, the production of the child's Personal Education Plan, and if there are particular difficulties in the school setting.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service

This service has responsibility for all looked after children and young people who have a plan for permanency via long term foster care, residential care, supported

accommodation, placement at home on Care Orders as well as Care Leavers, offering support up until 21 (25 if at university).

15. How we use your data

We take the collection, use and deletion of your personal information very seriously. We have a number of privacy notices which explain how our services use the information you give us and ensure it is adequately protected.

To view the Kirklees privacy notice please go to:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/information-and-data/how-we-use-your-data.aspx>

16. Complaints & Compliments

If carers wish to make a complaint or compliment about the service they can contact a manager of the service or:

Complaints and Representations Manager
Complaints Unit Freepost
Civic Centre 1
Ground Floor
High Street
Huddersfield
HD1 2NS
Email: yasmin.mughal@kirklees.gov.uk
Telephone: 01484 221000

Alternatively they may contact Ofsted. Ofsted is an independent organisation responsible for checking that Kirklees Fostering Service is complying with the set standards. A foster carer may also speak to them if they want to make a complaint or have a concern about the service. They can be contacted at:

Ofsted North,
3rd Floor
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
08456 404040
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk