

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE



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Introduction

This statement of purpose has been written in accordance with Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulations 3 (1) of the Fostering Regulations 2002. It sets out the Statement of Purpose for FosterCare UK Ltd and relates to the agency's operations as an independent fostering provider.

The FosterCare UK Statement of Purpose is designed for a wide readership including:

- Children and young people who are placed with our foster carers
- The agency's staff and consultants
- Foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Local Authorities and Children's Trusts, who place, or are considering placing with FosterCare UK Ltd.
- Colleagues from other social care agencies
- Health and educational establishments
- The general public

The FosterCare UK Statement of Purpose aims to meet, and where possible, exceed the requirements arising from:

- The Care Standards Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Fostering Service Regulations (England 2002)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England)
- UK National Standards for Foster Care (1999)

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Board of Directors and more frequently as necessary by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.

1 Status & Constitution

FosterCare UK Ltd, an independent fostering provider (IFP) is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (company number 6139705).

In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989, FosterCare UK Ltd has produced a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. FosterCare UK Ltd has a Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors meet regularly and are responsible for the corporate governance of the company, as well as determining and reviewing the company's:

- Strategic vision and direction
- Culture, values and principles
- Annual business plan
- Development issues
- Performance targets
- Policies and procedures
- Financial management
- Legal compliance
- Quality assurance

In doing so, the board meet the statutory duties and responsibilities as Directors of a registered company and ensure that all matters are reviewed regularly and in a planned way.

FosterCare UK Ltd is registered and inspected by Ofsted. **(Registration No: SC363485)**

FosterCare UK has organisational membership with:

- Fostering Network **(Membership No: 1077)**
- B.A.A.F **(Membership No: FMIFA/79573)**
- Information Commissioners' Office **(Registration No: Z9935313)**

2 Aims & Objectives

FosterCare UK Ltd is an independent fostering provider delivering high quality family placements to children and young people 'looked after' by Local Authorities.

FosterCare UK aims to:

- Provide foster care placements and support packages for children and young people 'looked after' that offer a stable and consistent experience of family life, to enhance and maximize their life opportunities.
- Recruit and retain foster carers from diverse backgrounds thus ensuring a range of appropriate placements for children and young people.
- Respect and promote the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.
- Consider the gender, suitability, disability of fostered children and young people when making placement decisions.
- Promote a child/young person centred approach.
- Provide a responsive, supportive and professional 24 hour service for foster carers, children/young people and local authorities.
- Provide a commitment to the ongoing learning and professional development of the agency, foster carers and staff.
- Establish, review and maintain policies and procedures that will comply with legislative and statutory requirements and expectations.

FosterCare UK key objectives are to:

- Develop our services in order that children and young people can develop and grow within the five outcomes areas of ECM:
 - Be Healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and Achieve
 - Make a Positive Contribution
 - Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- Prepare, support and train foster carers to enable them to provide high quality specialist foster care.
- Continuously monitor the services provided by the company to develop the provision accordingly.
- Support children and young people within their family placement to optimize their potential in all areas, including: educational, social, psychological, emotional and physical development.
- Ensure that a care plan for the child's future is acted upon within the timescales and parameters, set at each review.
- Work in close partnership with local authorities to promote and safeguard the best interests and welfare of the child/young person.
- Retain foster carers and staff through a strategy that ensures they are appropriately supervised, supported, rewarded and developed.

FosterCare UK Ltd was established and planned over a fourteen month period, on a sound financial basis. This will ensure we will offer placements that provide continuity for our customers, staff, children/young people and their foster carers.

3 Our Standards of Care

FosterCare UK is committed to the highest possible standards of care and undertakes to ensure that our practices comply with the UK National Standards (1999), National Minimum Standards (2000), The Children Act 1989 and Fostering Regulations 2002.

FosterCare UK defines the parameters and expectations of those standards throughout all of our documents, but in particular our:

- Policy, Procedures and Practice Manuals
- Foster Carers and Staff Manuals
- Foster Carers Agreement

FosterCare UK works in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure the maximum opportunity for children and young people to develop fully and achieve their full potential.

FosterCare UK maintains a clear focus on promoting and safeguarding their physical and emotional welfare and protecting them from all forms of abuse. We ensure the provision of appropriate health care and the opportunity to participate in decisions about health. We encourage and support the maintenance of family contacts and friendships and promote educational achievement and assist young people develop skills for independence.

Furthermore, our policies in relation to the recruitment, assessment, approval, training, management and support of foster carers reflects the expectations set out in the Code of Practice (1999).

3.1 Child Protection Procedures

FosterCare UK Child Protection Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any child protection matter to the Registered Manager. The overriding aim of the use of the guidelines and procedures is to ensure the protection of children. On receipt of an allegation, FosterCare UK seeks instruction from the child's placing authority and also liaises and consults with the area authority in which the foster carers reside.

In addition to this, we have adopted the Warner principles for recruitment and selection of staff and, as such, have appointed a named administrator who is responsible for the co-ordination of CRB checks, local authority checks, references and all employment safeguards.

3.2 Recruitment and Approval Process for Foster Carers

FosterCare UK is committed to the recruitment of foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people, through the provision of high quality care. All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to the following process:

- a) FosterCare UK requests detailed information and forwards information brochures, giving details about the work of the agency, along with application and consent forms.
- b) On receipt of a completed application form and subject to management review, an assessing social worker will undertake an initial visit and health and safety audit at the applicant/carer's home.

The applicant(s) complete an application form, giving detailed information about them, their family and consent for FosterCare UK to undertake necessary checks and enquiries to assess their suitability to foster.

3 Our Standards of Care cont.

These include enquiries to:

- Identity checks
- Criminal Records Bureau - checks on all adult members of the family over 18 years of age, and regular visitors to the household.
- Social Services Departments and their Child Protection Registers
- Other agencies (e.g. NSPCC, Probation, health and education) where appropriate.
- Ex partners
- Employment

The applicant(s) is/are required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and the report is forwarded to FosterCare UK's Medical Advisor for comments about the applicant(s) health and impact on the fostering task.

- c) The applicant(s) is/are asked to provide at least four personal referees who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. These references will include one for each person (if a couple) and one that has known both applicants for a minimum period of 6 years.
- d) A qualified social worker carries out a full Form F1 assessment, using the format published by BAAF, visiting the applicant(s) home between 7-9 times to meet and collect information about all members of the household, together with the applicant(s) experience and skills in relation to fostering.
- e) All applicants are required to attend the Skills to Foster Course. Applicants own children are also required to attend the Children's Skills to Foster Course. Both courses will be attended prior to the commencement of an assessment.
- f) During the assessment process applicant(s) will be helped to compile a portfolio of written material giving examples of relevant experience and skills.
- g) The Form F Assessment Report (without confidential references) is shared with the applicant(s) and presented to the FosterCare UK Fostering Panel.
- h) Applicants attend the Panel meeting to assist with the decision making process.
- i) The Panel makes a recommendation about the suitability of applicants to be approved as foster carers with FosterCare UK Ltd.

The FosterCare UK Responsible Individual makes the final decision about approval on behalf of the agency, having received the recommendation from the Panel.

Applicants are informed verbally and then in writing about the agency decision.

The assessment process takes 4-6 months on average and every effort is made to ensure there is no avoidable delay. All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file and electronically in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations (2002) and Data Protection Act 1989. On request some of this can be viewed. References from external agencies/individuals, which are provided in confidence, cannot be processed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referee.

3.3 The Fostering Panel

FosterCare UK has a fostering panel with agency representatives and at least six independent members, who meet to consider all applications from prospective foster carers:

- A full assessment is presented to the Panel, using BAAF Form F.

3 Our Standards of Care cont.

- A portfolio of competencies is completed, and made available to the Panel.
- Prospective foster carers must attend the Panel meeting.

The Panel make recommendations that are taken in to account when FosterCare UK makes the decision about approval.

All foster care reviews are presented to the panel, as may other reviews be. It is a requirement that all foster carers attend the panel for their first review to ensure feedback on the fostering task and to answer any questions the panel may have with regards agency support/systems and competence.

The Fostering Panel also advises on the policies and procedures of the agency, oversees the standards of assessments and provides advice and information on broader related subject matters.

An annual report is compiled by the Panel Chair and a panel guide is available for foster carers, applicants and young people.

3.4 Foster Care Agreements

Foster Care Agreements are completed and signed following approval and are in compliance with regulation 28(5) (b). All carers are issued with a policies, procedures and practice manual containing details and guidance on:

- Standards of care
- Support and training
- Annual carers review process
- Complaints and representations procedures
- Insurance provision
- Confidentiality
- Child protection procedures
- Behaviour management policy

Foster carers also complete an undertaking to confirm that they will:

- Care appropriately for children and young people in placement, as identified in the foster placement agreement.
- Inform FosterCare UK of any relevant significant changes to their household or details
- Follow procedures laid down within the agency's handbook.

3.5 Review of Foster Carers

FosterCare UK has a detailed procedure for completion of reviews of foster carers which reflects the statute law, regulations, National Minimum Standards and good practice guidance.

In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, the FosterCare UK procedure clearly sets out other situations in which completion of a foster care review would be appropriate, e.g. following a serious complaint or incident.

The review procedure focuses on the core competencies for foster carers that appear in the BAAF Form F assessment format and this includes an appraisal of training and development needs. It also audits the five Every Child Matters outcomes. An independent reviewing officer conducts the annual reviews of foster carers.

4 Management Structure & Staffing

FosterCare UK is managed by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager. The Service Manager (The Registered Manager) is responsible for the day to day operation of the agency and for the development of services to children and young people.

The Responsible Individual is: Jonathan Toomey

Jonathan Toomey has been involved in fostering for the majority of his life. His parents fostered many young people over a period of more than thirty years and in March 1989 set up Fostering Support Group (FSG), the second Independent Fostering Service to be established in the UK. Jonathan joined the family business in 1991, undertaking various roles while gaining experience and undergoing management training. From 2002 Jonathan managed the operational component of Fostering Support Group and from February 2005 until he left the company in 2007 his role was Responsible Individual/Managing Director.

Jonathan established FosterCare UK in March 2007 and undertakes strategic planning and direction of the service and is Responsible Individual and Managing Director. He specialises in business development, contracting and commissioning, partnership working/modelling and the setting of high service standards.

Jonathan has a great deal of experience in managing a highly reputable independent fostering service. During his many years in the sector he has achieved CSCI ratings of 100% met and 85% exceeded (November 2006), established the first joint forum group for IFPs in the South East, achieved Investor in People and ISO 9000 service recognition and played an integral role in the development of the Pan London Contract. He also assisted other organisations in establishing and managing high-quality residential and educational services.

The Registered Manager is: Alison Finn (DipSW)

Alison Finn (DipSW) is a Director of FosterCare UK and undertakes the role of Registered Manager. Alison has extensive experience in social work and has been involved in the social care sector for more than 12 years, undertaking a range of positions in education, health, fostering and residential settings.

Alison has played an integral role in the development of policies and procedures and quality assurance models for the agency. Alison is a qualified social worker, who is registered with the General Social Care Council.

Prior to joining FosterCare UK Alison was working as a Supervising Social Worker and was responsible for the supervision, support, training and development of foster carers within a well established and reputed fostering organisation.

Alison brings a wealth of knowledge of good social work practice and safeguarding young children as well as the determination and passion to develop a strong and ethical fostering provision at FosterCare UK.

4 Management Structure & Staffing cont.

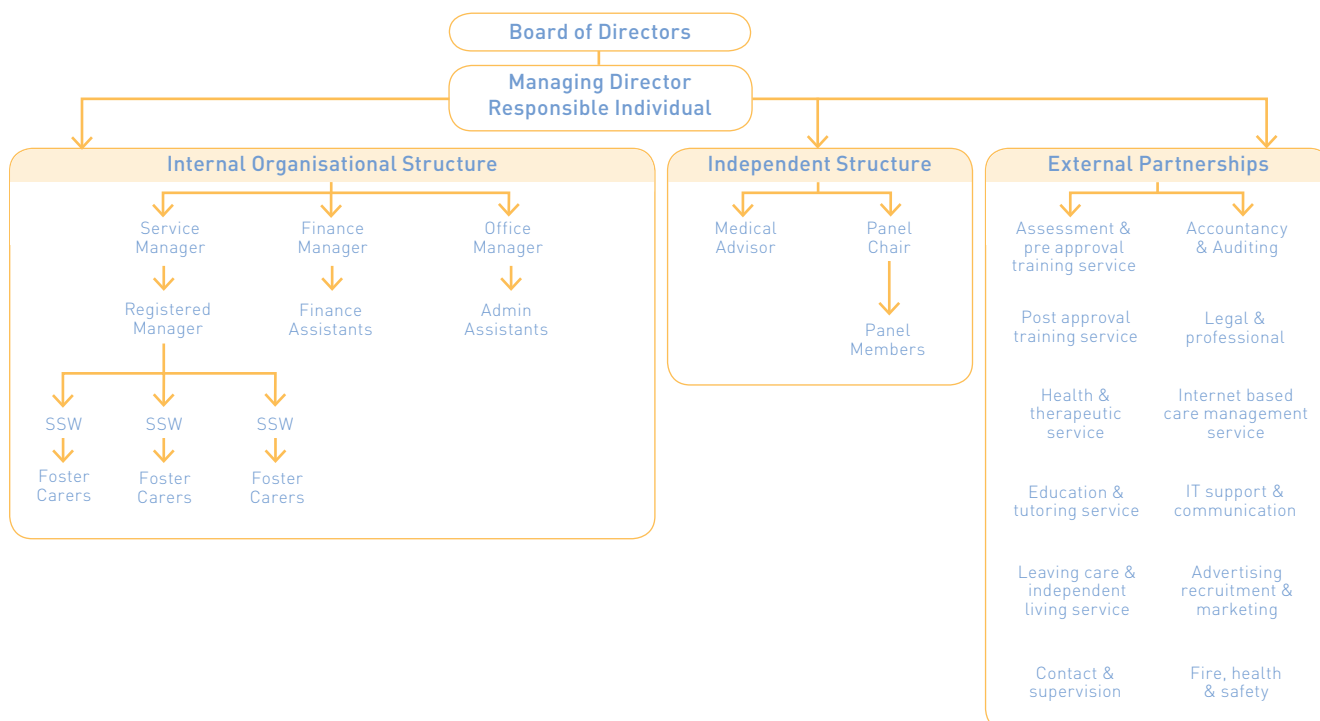
In addition to the above, FosterCare UK employs registered managers and qualified social workers as supervising social workers. The SSW's are responsible for providing support and supervision to foster carers. All supervising social workers have an appropriate social work qualification e.g DipSW/CSS/CQSW and are registered with the General Social Care Council.

Supervising social workers are supervised and supported by the Registered Manager, whom are accountable and supervised by the Service Manager. Foster carers are responsible for providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment, promoting the welfare of children and young people entrusted in their care.

We employ administrators to conduct statutory enquiries regarding foster carers, maintain policies and procedures, establish systems to maintain full information and records regarding foster carers and children in placement. Key financial services, including invoices and payments are also undertaken by appropriately qualified financial personnel. A named individual takes all details of referrals and publishes regular vacancy lists.

Management and supervising social workers manage and co-ordinate the 24 hour out of hours service.

Regional Structure



4 Management Structure & Staffing cont.

In addition to the above, FosterCare UK has service level agreements with specialist services that provide:

- Business support and advice and full accountancy and financial services, including the preparation of monthly management accounts and annual updating of the budget.
- Design, marketing, printing, recruitment, campaigns.
- Information technology, database and systems development.
- Independent tutoring and education liaison services for children and young people.
- Independent health and consultancy services for children and young people.
- Initial visit, Form F Assessment and pre-approval training.
- Post approval training, in line with CWDC guidelines and standards of care.
- Independent and leaving care support.
- Health/Safety and Fire specialists for office maintenance and regulations.

All staff, whether directly employed on a service contract or providing services under a service agreement, are subject to the full range of enquiries including:

- Criminal Records Bureau
- Verbal and written references from previous and current employers
- Copies of qualifications
- Local Authority checks
- Health and identity checks

All staff who work for FosterCare UK, either permanent, part-time or self-employed are covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance and all have role profiles, contracts of employment and/or contractual project briefs.

FosterCare UK Insurance liabilities cover is in line with Local Authority contractual requirements and is as follows:

- Employers - £10 million
- Public/products - £5 million
- Professional - £1 million

5 Services & Facilities

5.1 Fostering Placements

FosterCare UK has a named individual who is the first point of contact for local authorities making referrals or enquiries about placement choice and availability. All placements are appropriately and professionally 'matched' ensuring a detailed process between the needs of children and young people and the skills and experience of foster carers to meet those needs.

The agency provides a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with foster carers, these include:

- Parent & child placements
- Long term placements
- Short term placements
- Sibling groups
- Placements for children who are disabled
- Respite placements
- Asylum seeker placements
- Assessment placements
- Bridging placements
- Emergency placements
- Solo placements

All placements made with foster carers are undertaken and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Regulations (2002).

Therefore:

- Individual 'Foster Placement Agreements' are prepared either before or at the point of placement, which include essential information sharing and care plans.
- Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including introductions between foster carers and children. In the case of emergency placements, immediate care planning is given timely attention.

5.2 Support for Children and Young people

All children and young people in placement with FosterCare UK are visited regularly as part of the role of the Supervising Social Worker. In undertaking this, due consideration is given to the role and involvement of the local authority social worker, so that there is clarity between the roles and responsibilities of each agency and social worker.

The Supervising Social Worker will ensure that the best interests of the child and/or young person is being safeguarded and promoted, and identify further services that are appropriate to promote their physical, mental and emotional welfare.

5 Services & Facilities cont.

FosterCare UK commissions qualified, accredited and experienced educational and therapeutic professionals on a sessional basis to provide psychological support, assistance and information to children and young people in placement. This support also extends to foster carers and supervising social workers.

5.3 Social Work Service

In addition to the child's social worker, a supervising social worker is allocated to support and supervise every foster carer with the placements they provide.

The Supervising Social Worker will:

- Maintain regular contact with the foster carer and children in placement through monthly placement visits and daily/weekly telephone calls.
- Make six monthly unannounced visits to the foster home.
- Provide advice, guidance and support to the foster carer on their care of children in placement.
- Participate in the out of office hour's management and support to carers and local authorities.
- Investigate and co-ordinate other support services as appropriate.
- Liaise with other professionals and contribute to reviews and formal meetings in respect of care planning.
- Provide formal supervision and identify and respond to foster carers training and development needs.
- Keep accurate records and provide regular updates, always keeping local authority social workers informed of the progress of young people in placement.

FosterCare UK employs Supervising Social Workers who are suitably qualified and experienced to undertake the role. Every effort will be made to match children with families that reflect their religious, cultural and diversity needs. Issues around child protection will be dealt with immediately, in line with agreed procedures.

School attendance and academic achievement will be promoted for all children and young people, in line with the Dfee. Daily written records and logs on each child or young person will be maintained and provided to placing authorities, on request.

Corporal punishment will NOT be used in any circumstances. Guidance is provided on the use of sanctions and a written record kept of any implementation.

FosterCare UK and its carers will maintain vigilance and confidentiality. Foster carers will have continuing training, including NVQ's and CWDC standards, and at least monthly support group meetings. FosterCare UK ensures each foster carer and foster home fulfils all health and safety and risk assessment requirements. Foster carers will work to an agreed care plan and within the terms of the placement agreement. Foster carers will promote agreed contact with the children's families unless this is considered detrimental to the child.

5 Services & Facilities cont.

Foster carers will receive regular support visits (at least once a month) from supervising social workers and regular telephone contact (weekly or daily, dependent on need). An 'out of hours' support service will be provided to foster carers by experienced, qualified social workers, with management support, as required.

5.4 Matching

All young people's placements are closely matched to ensure that their needs are met by the skills and experience of our foster carers.

FosterCare UK have an appointed referrals person, who is the first point of contact for enquiries about placement choices and who liaises closely with the Registered Managers and supervising social workers, foster carers and local authorities to ensure the best possible match and outcomes for the child.

5.5 Financial

Foster carers receive an appropriate weekly fostering allowance, which is paid directly into their bank accounts via BACS transfer on a fortnightly basis. In addition, foster carers also receive three weeks paid respite per child, per year (additional respite support is provided as and when identified).

Carers are self-employed and pay their own tax and national insurance. Detailed financial information and guidance is supplied to foster carers within the Foster Care Policies, Procedures and Practice Manual.

5.6 Management and Support

All foster carers have a named, fully qualified supervising social worker. It is this social worker's responsibility to manage and support the carer in the fostering task. FosterCare UK supervising social workers understand that they have a responsibility for ensuring that the child in placement needs are paramount, even though they do not have case management responsibility for the child.

The supervising social worker will visit the carer at least monthly while a child is in placement and when there is no child in placement every 6 weeks. Visits will be undertaken at least once a fortnight, if needed. There will also be daily and weekly telephone contact. All foster carers are enrolled as members of the Fostering Network (financed by FosterCare UK) as this provides excellent up-to-date information and legal insurance should carers be the subject of an allegation or need legal advice.

5.7 Emergency Support (On-call service)

At weekends, during the evenings and at night, foster carers are offered an on-call service, which is staffed by a supervising social worker, who in turn is supported by a Senior Manager.

Carers are encouraged to contact the 'on-call' social worker for support and guidance. The office telephone numbers are diverted out-of-hours to the on-call social worker. In addition, a senior director is also always available via a mobile phone.

FosterCare UK also provides a 24 hour referrals and home finding service available to Local Authorities/Social Services Departments for the emergency placements of children and young people.

5 Services & Facilities cont.

5.8 Supervisory Visits

Supervising social workers are responsible for ensuring that the standard of care offered to children in foster care is of a high standard, including safe caring practices and assisting carers to achieve a good standard of care for the children. Supervision meetings are a good opportunity for all parties to raise issues of concern and also allow for the opportunity to discuss placement progress. The supervising social workers also have a primary responsibility for assisting in the career development of carers, establishing training needs with them and making plans to meet these needs and supporting them in attendance.

5.9 Unannounced Visits

Part of the monitoring of the work of the foster carer is occasional unannounced visits by the supervising social worker. There will be at least two unannounced visits each year. These visits are not intended to be intrusive in any way.

5.10 Foster Care Review

As set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service Regulations 2002, all foster carers must undergo an Annual Review. The main aim of the Annual Review is to determine whether approval should be renewed and whether there should be any change in the terms of approval. The review will include written reports from the carer's Supervising Social Worker, Registered Manager, the local authority Social Worker, children and young people in placement, children of the household/carers and the foster carers themselves. Once completed, it is signed by the carers and their supervising social worker.

The Annual Review is an opportunity to look at progress in meeting targets set for the improvement of skills, to set new goals and action plan for the next year. Training needs are assessed and commitment to further training agreed.

5.11 Record Keeping

Foster carers are expected to keep a daily log of significant events appertaining to the child/ren in placement. Maintaining diaries and logs is an important part of the foster carers role, and accurate, factual and unbiased recording is therefore paramount.

It should also be noted that these diary recordings could, should the need arise, be used as evidence in the Court system. This record will be kept in a daily log, one for each child in placement. Diaries and logs are supplied by FosterCare UK, and remain the property of FosterCare UK, so at placement end, they should be returned to the Agency, who will ensure safe storage and availability for a child or local authority to view in the future, should they wish.

5.12 Policies & Procedures

FosterCare UK has developed a comprehensive, but easy to understand, foster carer policies, procedures and practice manual. It is issued to every approved foster carer, in order to aid them with the fostering task. The manual contains information on financial, fostering law, health and safety matters, assessing the needs of children and young people, care planning, health, education, complaints and grievances, training, child protection and record keeping.

The manual is reviewed throughout the year and updates issued annually or as required to foster carers. There is also an appendix section for foster carers to keep safe all certificates, regular updates, important correspondence from FosterCare UK and useful telephone numbers and addresses.

6 Complaint & Outcomes

The FosterCare UK Complaints Procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level i.e Stage 1 informal problem solving. Records of investigations and outcomes of complaints resolved informally are held on file for inspection by Ofsted and other regulatory bodies.

All children/young people placed with FosterCare UK foster carers are informed of the organisation's complaints procedure via a Children's Guide/handbook and an individual complaints leaflet, which sets out a clear diagram of how to complain.

All foster carers, staff and children's/young persons social workers are also provided with information about FosterCare UK complaints procedures.

Stage 2 complaints are those where resolution at **Stage 1** has not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke **Stage 2** of the procedure direct. Complaints of this nature are dealt with by the Registered Manager, and if appropriate independent officers are appointed to carry out formal investigations.

The FosterCare UK's representations and Complaints procedure has scope for a complaint, if dissatisfied by the response in **Stage 2**, to request that the matter be referred to the Responsible Individual - **Stage 3**.

Summary details of complaints and their outcomes are filed confidentially and can be provided upon request.

7 Foster Carers/Children & Young People

Upon request

8 Statement of Financial Position

Upon request

To obtain the above information (sections 7 — 8) or for any other information please put your request in writing to:

Head Office:

The Responsible Individual • FosterCare UK Ltd
Home Farm • Betteshanger • Deal • Kent • CT14 0NT
Tel: 0844 800 1941 • Fax: 01304 619018
Email: enquiries@fostercareuk.co.uk

www.fostercareuk.co.uk



mosaicappeals.com



fostercare UK

FosterCare UK's Mosaic Appeal is an exciting fundraising venture for Make-a-Wish Foundation. We have created a digital mosaic complete with 600 tiles, and we are now inviting you to help grant magical wishes to children and young people fighting life-threatening illnesses by buying a virtual tile. Please visit: www.makeawish.mosaicappeal.com.

FosterCare UK is registered in England and Wales • No: 6139705 • Registered office as above