



## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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## INTRODUCTION

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This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and associated statutory guidance (both as amended) and the National Minimum Standards (England)2011.

The statement has been prepared to provide information for foster carers, service users, professionals and members of the public about the fostering service's aims and objectives and how our services will improve outcomes for looked after children.

This Statement of Purpose offers an outline of how Liberty Foster Care organises and delivers its service, to children, their families and Local Authorities who commission the placements.

A copy of the Statement of Purpose will be made available upon request, to:

- Any person working for the purposes of the Fostering Service.
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer of the Fostering Service.
- Any child/young person placed with a foster carer by the Fostering Service.
- The parent of any such child/young person.
- Any placing authority of any child placed in Liberty foster care

In 2018, Ofsted rated Liberty Foster Care as good and assessed that Liberty provided good quality of care for children and young people that resulted in very positive outcomes.

The Fostering Service must ensure that all times, service is conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose. This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed, updated and modified whenever necessary. If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to this document or the Fostering Service please contact:

Madhavi Lata  
Registered Manager  
Liberty Foster Care  
February 2019

## KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

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Liberty Foster Care aims to provide safety, stability, and nurture children and young people placed with our foster families. We believe this is the basis for achieving positive outcomes for children & young people, building their confidence and capacity to meet the challenges of adult life. We value, support and encourage children to develop as individuals. We are committed to ensuring that the services offered to children are based on statutory requirements, comprehensive principles and good practice.

### **Service objectives**

In relation to placements, Liberty Foster Care aims: -

- To provide children with a positive, safe and nurturing experience of foster care.
- To work as far as possible with a manageable number of local authorities and education authorities in order to make meaningful partnerships in the best interests of children.
- To minimise discontinuities in the lives of vulnerable children and young people including the premature ending or disruption of placements.
- To recruit foster carers who have the potential to develop their fostering knowledge and skills to the highest standards,
- To provide carers with the support and training necessary for their continuing development, with the aim of empowering them to manage a wide range of complex and challenging behaviour so that vulnerable children feel secure and develop their potential.
- To offer foster carers a robust package of professional support and financial remuneration, in order to protect the choice of placements for children.
- We aim to offer services in an inclusive partnership-based approach which embraces children and young people, where appropriate their families, foster carers, the local authorities and other agency colleagues from particularly, Health, Education & Leisure.

## ROLE OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

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Liberty Foster Care provides alternative foster families for looked after children, placing them with foster carers, who have been assessed and approved by Liberty. To achieve the best outcomes for children it is imperative that a very careful process of matching child's needs and carers skills, abilities and resources are carefully considered. Liberty Foster Care takes issues of child's individual physical, emotional, educational and social needs into consideration before offering to place a child with the foster carer. We also take into consideration that wherever possible siblings are placed together. We offer support to our carers to enable them to continue to support the children to maintain contact with their family and friends.

### **Emergency Placements:**

Emergency foster placements are needed on short notices to ensure a child's safety. Liberty Foster Care offers support to children in times of such crisis. Where ever possible, we obtain detailed information about the child's needs and circumstances so that we can offer the best possible fostering household to safely meet their needs.

### **Short-term fostering:**

Foster carers mostly look after a child for a time limited period in order to allow children's social workers to make long term plans for them. These plans may include helping a child to return home, whilst certain care concerns are addressed or parent's personal circumstances improve. These plans may include for a child to be placed with a permanent family or be adopted. Foster carers offer invaluable support to children and young people who are experiencing transitions to their long-term future.

### **Long-term fostering:**

Liberty offers long term placements to children and young people, who require continued stability and support until they reach age 18years. On occasions a short-term placement may become a long-term placement due to changes in the child's care plan. We support our carers in reaching out and supporting the children's long term futures.

### **Staying Put:**

Liberty Foster care inspires and reassures young people to remain with their foster carer beyond the age of 18 years under the 'Staying Put' policy. We do aim to provide young people with the extension of care and support from the carer, that has offered them with a nurturing relationship and stability.

We offer commitment and care to young people beyond the age of who reach age 18 by encouraging and supporting the carers to consider 'Staying Put' for young people in their care where it is considered to be in the young person's interest.

### **Short Breaks for children and young people:**

We have only recently recruited a short break foster carer. In addition, some of our foster carers are keen to undertake short break placements in order to support the children and their families.

### **The Parent and Child Fostering:**

We offer parent and child placements to facilitates and supports parents to develop their skills in caring for their child. We also actively contribute to the parenting assessments undertaken by the respective local authorities to make long term decisions for children.

The wishes and feelings of children are sought and acted on where this is consistent with their welfare. Children are encouraged to participate in the development of our service via the Looked After Children's consultation days

We highly appreciate the role our foster carers undertake in delivering measurable outcomes for children in placements. During placement planning, supervision, support, training and development of foster carers, we remain focused on enabling them to working in close partnerships with children and all involved as a team around the child.

Liberty Foster Care also remains focused on the good outcomes for children by promoting their welfare. We endeavour to provide individualised care to children that helps them stay safe, develop a sense of positive identity, enables them to enjoy good health, achieve in education and promotes contact with their birth family and significant others.

Children and young people's safety is of paramount. We follow the principals and good practice guidelines along with regulatory requirements in ensuring that safe recruitments of staff and foster carers is ensured. This assists us in offering secure family placements to children to grow up in environments where their needs are well met.

The principles and standards upon which placements are offered and managed are based on Every Child Matters (ECM) Outcomes Framework. The five ECM outcomes which we would want to achieve for all children and young people placed with us is:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

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Liberty Foster Care has an equal opportunities policy that applies to all involved with Liberty. The Equal Opportunity policy is based on the Race Relations Amendment Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The legislation assists us to not only make a clear statement of our goals and objectives but our commitment to offer all services in an inclusive way. Therefore, not discriminating on the grounds of race, gender, religion, language, disability, sexuality, age or on any other grounds. A copy of this policy is available on request.

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Quality systems are in place to ensure optimum service delivery and there are clear lines of accountability and delegation. Liberty Foster Care ensures that comprehensive and up to

date records on all children placed and all foster carers providing placements are maintained.

Liberty Foster Care adheres to the highest standards of management in terms of its staffing and the ethos of the service provided. Competent and experienced staffs are employed to recruit suitable foster carers to meet the needs of children and young people requiring a service. All staff is appropriately qualified and properly checked and trained. Liberty Foster Care is committed to meeting and enhancing the learning and developmental needs of both staff and foster carers.

## RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER CARERS

Liberty Foster Care's recruitment strategy is not just about recruiting more carers but to attract prospective carers who have the skills, experiences and capacity to offer the best care possible to children and young people. It is imperative that our pool of carers can meet the needs of the children coming into the placements so that their experience of being looked after provides them with care, stability, security and positive life chances and outcomes.

## ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF FOSTER CARERS

Liberty Foster Care complies with the regulatory and best practice guidelines concerning recruitment of foster carers. The assessments are always undertaken by qualified social workers under the supervision of the Registered Manager. Liberty ensures that an in-depth assessment is completed by using the Coram BAAF form F. This assessment of suitability is completed in two stages, in line with the Fostering Regulations 2013. Although the two stages can run concurrently, Stage 2 cannot be progressed unless a decision has been made following checks and information gathering carried out successfully.

## THE FOSTERING PANEL

In accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, Liberty Foster Care has a well-established independent fostering panel which consists of highly skilled and experienced chairpersons and two vice chairpersons, who have been recruited due to the necessary experience and expertise they possess. The panel consists of a central list of panel members and these include foster carers, educationalists and people with experience of the looked after children system.

The independent fostering panel's functions include:

- Consideration of and making recommendation about the approval of prospective foster carers.
- Consideration of extension of foster carer's approval terms at their first annual review then followed by every third annual review or as requested by the Fostering Service.
- The termination of foster carer's registration.

- To consider and provide advice on any other issues affecting Liberty Foster Care.
- Consider any reviews where there are care standards or child protection concerns
- Liberty's panel provides a thorough and critical consideration of all cases presented to it in order to make suitable recommendations to the agency decision maker who makes the final decision.

All foster carers must have an annual household review to remain approved, within 12 months of the last review. A review of foster carer's approval must also take place following a significant change in the carer's household, a significant break from fostering by the foster carer, or at the request of the foster carer, after a serious complaint or allegation about the foster carer household.

Following the panel's recommendations, the Agency Decision Maker deliberates on all the evidences considered by the panel. Agency Decision Maker considers Panel's recommendations when reaching their decision.

All successful applicants are offered an induction programme and provided with a Foster Carer Agreement, which authorises their appointment as a Liberty Foster Carer. The Foster Care agreement also gives details about the terms of approval and how these will be reviewed

## MATCHING AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

Liberty Foster Care ensures that a careful matching of children with foster carers takes place. A good quality of matching consideration is essential to safeguard looked after children as well as the foster carers and members of their household. In considering a match with foster carer, we consider if the carer has the required skills and experiences to effectively safeguard and promote a child's welfare.

Wherever possible we offer placements that enable child to continue with their educational provision and maintain their community and social relationships. We offer placements that reflect a child's cultural, racial, linguistic & religious needs to promote a child's identity.

Where practicable, children are given the opportunity for a period of introduction to a proposed foster carer so they can have a say about their proposed placement and become familiar with the carer and the carer's family, and where appropriate, any other children in placement.

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS

A comprehensive training programme is provided to all foster carers. All carers undertake pre-approval Skills to Foster training programme. This training is specifically designed to ensure that prospective carers become familiar with a range of skills and knowledge base. Liberty has a core group of training courses that are to be completed in the in the first year of approval. Liberty regards its foster carers as a key professional group whose developmental needs are identified and met in a structured and strategic way.

The Training Programmes are accessed both electronically and by attendance at the training programme. Some of the courses include: Child Protection and Safeguarding, Attachment, Record Keeping, Food Safety, Drug Awareness, Education and Looked After Children, E-Safety, Child Sexual exploitation & Radicalisation of children and young people etc.

All foster carers have a personal development plan which takes account of their training needs to continue to develop their skills in meeting children's needs. We offer a full training and support group service. Foster carers and short breaks carers are supported to complete their TSD standards evidence book within the first year of approval.

## SAFEGUARDING

A child's safety and welfare is paramount and all looked after children placed in foster care are subject to regular independently chaired statutory reviews in line with the Care Planning Regulations 2011. Liberty Foster Care offers training programmes for members of staff and foster carers on safeguarding and understanding risk, child sexual exploitation, and missing children.

All foster carers will have a safe caring policy in place which is reviewed each time a child joins the fostering household. Complaints against foster carers regarding standards of care will be robustly investigated and foster carers will receive support during this process. Timely action will be taken where a foster carer has clearly failed to maintain a good standard of care in placement.

There are clear policies in place to ensure that children are protected from harm and these policies do offer guidance to foster carers and staff in key areas such as child protection, safer caring, safeguarding children, bullying, and health and safety.

Risk assessments are completed and reviewed regularly and there is clear standard of care procedures in the event of concerns about a foster carer's ability to care appropriately for a child placed with them.

Any complaints or allegations against foster carers will be robustly investigated however, foster carers will receive appropriate support during this process. All complaints and allegations are recorded and reviewed in line with procedural guidelines. Foster carers also have access to Liberty's complaints procedure.

## SUPERVISION & SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS

All Liberty foster carers have an allocated supervising social worker who offers regular supervision in keeping with the fostering regulations. The supervising social workers visits the children and carers at monthly intervals, or more frequently if required by child and or carer's needs. Supervising social worker will also visit when needed or as requested by the foster carer. Supervising social worker's records all minutes of the supervision and any

additional meetings on an e-Care recording system. These records are accessible to the carer concerned. All foster carers will have an unannounced visit at least every 12 months.

A 24-hour service is offered to support foster carers. This service is available on 365 days of the year.

Liberty Foster Care continues to support its carers by offering them membership of the Foster Talk. This enables carers to use all the advice and support services provided by the service including legal protection and insurance advice.

#### LIBERTY FOSTER CARE SERVICE STRUCTURE:

The service is organised and managed by its Managing Director Mr. John Harper who is also the responsible Individual. He manages the Company and determines what direction it should take, He is supported by Ms. Madhavi Lata, who is the Registered Manager for Liberty Foster Care. She undertakes responsibility for the day to day management of the service.

Liberty Foster Care is well supported by three additional social workers, a fostering support officer and a duty & recruitment officer. All social workers & the registered manager hold a social work qualification. Support worker has the relevant childcare experience. She is also an experienced trainer. All staff have relevant skills and experiences to meet the requirements of their duties and responsibilities.

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Liberty Foster Care pays an allowance to foster carer at a level of maintenance which exceeds the government fostering allowance for every age band. Foster carer's allowances help with the costs of caring for children in the placement as well as a fee for caring for the child.

#### MONITORING AND CONTROL:

Liberty Foster Care has established procedures in place for and monitoring its activities and ensuring that it meets the quality performance standards. the Registered Manager is the designated Child Protection Officer for the service.

#### COMPLAINTS

Everyone who receives a service from Liberty Foster Care or gives a service to the Agency has a right to complain if s/he feels that Liberty Foster Care has done something badly or has neglected to do something, which should have been done. A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet. It may be about the organisation, about the implementation of decisions, about the quality or appropriateness of services, or their delivery or non-delivery.

At the heart of the complaints procedure is the clear understanding that the protection, welfare and interests of the child or young person must come first. Complaints can be made by children, staff, foster carers, local authorities and other involved directly or indirectly with the service. The complaint can be made about the service offered, the action of personnel involved or the decisions made.

Liberty Foster Care believes that service users and their families, and foster carers, have the right to express their views for example compliments, complaints, suggestions or representations about the services that are arranged and delivered, and that by doing so we can improve quality and effectiveness. Suggestions and complaints are viewed as a positive means of ensuring the quality of service is reviewed, both at a local level and through the formal complaints procedure.

There is a written procedure given to all foster carers as part of the Foster Carers Handbook on the complaints procedure. Looked after children are also provided with information on how to make a complaint and how to get independent advice and support should the need arise.

Some looked after children may want their foster carer to make the complaint on their behalf. Foster carer may also make a complaint on behalf of a younger child or a child with disabilities. These complaints would be dealt with under the Children Act 1989 and Liberty Foster Carer's Complaints Procedure.

Ofsted Piccadilly Gate  
4, Store Street,  
Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel. 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Address:

If any stakeholders have any feedback or comments about this document or the role of Liberty Foster Care then, please contact:

Madhavi Lata  
Registered Manager  
Liberty foster Care  
Passfield Business Centre  
Lynchborough Road  
Hampshire  
GU30 7SB  
01428624550  
07887374299