

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

FOSTERPLUS LIMITED

FOSTERPLUS SOUTH

SC065614

INTRODUCTION

Fosterplus (part of the Polaris Group of agencies) is an independent Fostering Agency providing a range of services for Children Looked After established over 21 years ago. Fosterplus prides itself on finding the best possible matches between foster parents and children and young people; increasing their sense of connection and providing a positive and stable environment which helps them develop continuously.

The Agency is run in accordance with all current legislation including the Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, the Care Standards Act 2000, The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (amended 2013) and Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011.

Fosterplus Limited currently has 2 registered offices in England; 1) at Long Eaton, Derbyshire (Midlands and South Yorkshire) with sub-offices in Doncaster and Coventry, and 2) at Wavendon, Milton Keynes, covering the South of England, with a sub-office at Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. The functions carried out from each of the registered offices include foster parents recruitment, marketing and administration. The sub-office functions include foster parents training and support.

Fosterplus (South) Limited is registered and regulated by Ofsted, Registration number SC 065614. Angela Turland is the Registered Manager of Fosterplus South and commenced in post in November 2018.

The registered address for Fosterplus South is:

Fosterplus Limited

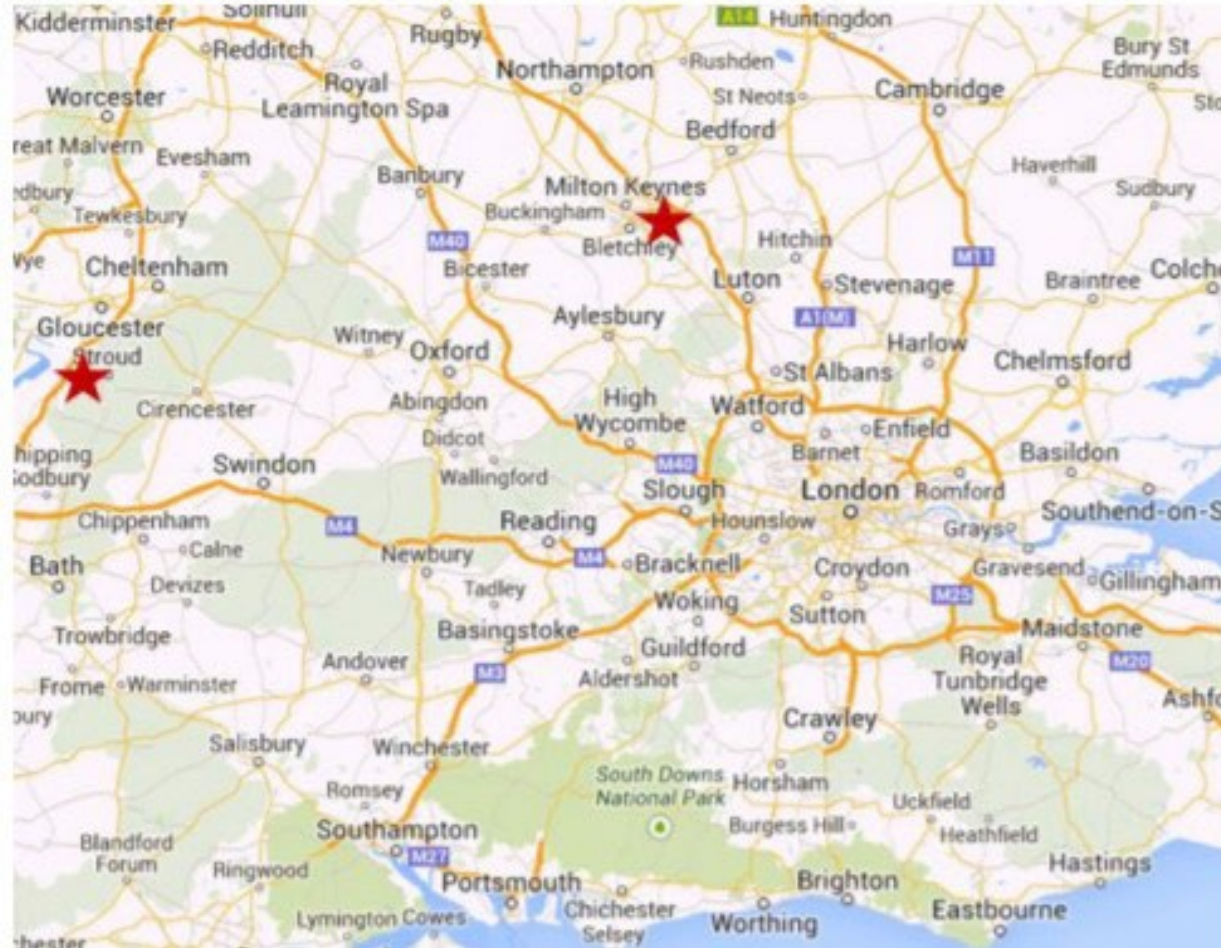
Wavendon Tower
Wavendon Business Park
Ortensia Drive
Milton Keynes
MK17 8LX
Tel: 01908 804499
e-mail:
askus.miltonkeynes@fosterplus.co.uk
www.fosterplus.co.uk

The sub-office addresses of Fosterplus South is:

Fosterplus Limited

Eycott Suit (39G)
Swan House
Bond's Mill Estate
Stonehouse
Gloucestershire
GL10 3RF
Tel: 01453 825600
www.fosterplus.co.uk
e-mail: askus.Stonehouse@fosterplus.co.uk

Map for Fosterplus South



Aims and Objectives, Principles and Standards

The aim of the Agency is to assist the placing authorities in meeting their requirements to improve the wellbeing of children in relation to the *Five Outcomes for Children*. These are:

- ☺ Physical and mental health and emotional well being
 - ☺ Protection from harm and neglect
 - ☺ Education training and recreation
 - ☺ The contribution made by them to society
 - ☺ Social and economic well being
- (Section 10 Children Act 2004)*

Improving the above outcomes will be achieved by:

- ☺ Placing the child at the centre of all services provided
- ☺ Providing clear procedural guidance for staff and foster parents which defines the Agency's service standards in a simple manner
- ☺ Consulting with service users and care receivers
- ☺ Recruiting foster parents and staff from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds to reflect the needs of service users
- ☺ Providing a service which is based on equal opportunities and is inclusive through valuing diversity
- ☺ Working in true partnership with all significant persons involved with the young person
- ☺ A commitment to on-going training for staff and foster parents
- ☺ Providing the highest quality support to Foster parents

The detailed service standards of the Agency are contained within the Agency's policy and procedure documents; these are available by request. Alternatively these can be downloaded by approved foster parents accessing their secure online agency database known as CHARMS.

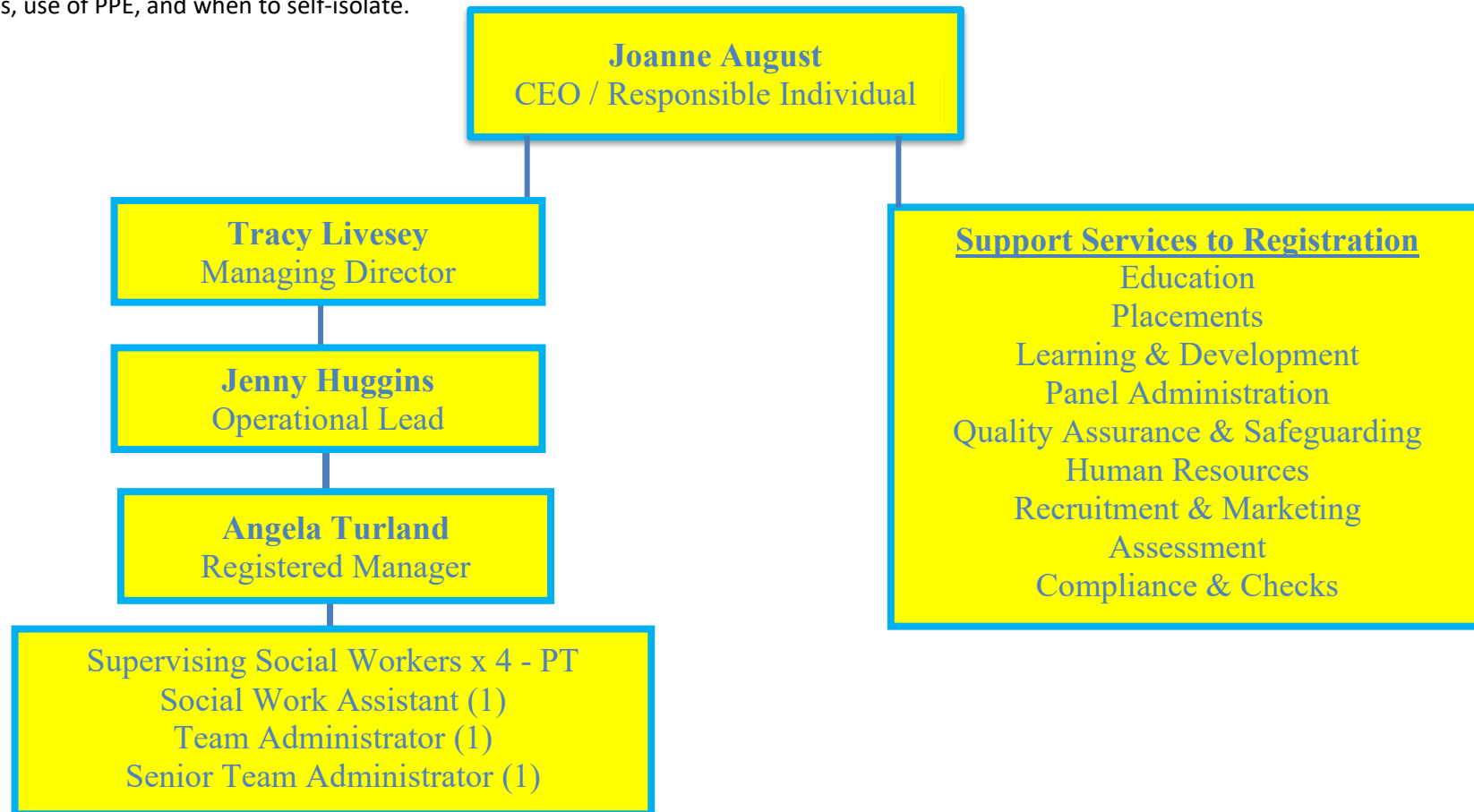
It is the Agency's belief that the best outcomes for children will be achieved by making the best matches between the foster parents and child, thus taking into account their values, ethnicity, culture and skills, and marrying them with the specific needs of each child. The Agency will continually strive to improve the services it offers and will not accept anything other than the highest standards. An integral part of the quality review and quality improvement process involves care-experienced young people providing input, via consultation, involvement and activities throughout the design, implementation and delivery of the Agency's operations.

Services provided

- ☺ Form F Assessments
- ☺ Respite Placements
- ☺ Bridging Placements
- ☺ Emergency Placements
- ☺ Long term Placements
- ☺ Short term Placements
- ☺ Unaccompanied Minor Placements
- ☺ Permanent Placements
- ☺ Disability Placements
- ☺ Pre-Adoption Placements

Coronavirus

*A robust group COVID-19 Strategy is in place which outlines how we will work with regions and agencies to provide information and planning through this period, to keep our colleagues and families safe and well. There is a dedicated team who regularly provide up to date guidance and documentation around the COVID-19 outbreak. This helps us to continuously risk assess, and ensures we meet government guidance on shielding, social distancing, hygiene measures, use of PPE, and when to self-isolate.



Polaris

Fosterplus Limited is comprised of 2 Registrations: Fosterplus Midlands and South Yorkshire and Fosterplus South. Both are registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Registration Number 3196297). Fosterplus Limited is part of Polaris, one of the UK's largest leading communities of children's service providers.

Early in 2019, Core Assets Group (CAG) and Partnerships in Children's Services (PICS) joined forces to create one unified community of fostering and children's services. We launched our new name Polaris in June 2020, signifying a 'bright, guiding star', which reflects how we want to support our young people. We want to be knowledgeable and to guide them to a brighter future.

The Polaris Community is the overarching umbrella for all of our collective agencies which consists of ISP, Foster Care Associates, Foster Care Associates Scotland, Active Care Solutions, Fostering People, Adopters for Adoption, LCS, Clifford House, Orange Grove, Fosterplus and also the renamed, Polaris Children's Services.

Within the Polaris community, we have independent fostering and adoption agencies who have been passionately improving the lives of young people for over 30 years, as well as Leaving Care services, Education and bespoke children's services contracts. Our nurturing community works collectively to support the very best outcomes for each and every child in our care. We're ambitious for our children and young people, families and staff, and believe in their futures. We are proud at Fosterplus South to be part of such an inspiring, skilled and supportive community.

Who is in the Senior Management Team?

Jo August, CEO continues to lead the Polaris Community as our CEO with Jonathan Clark as CFO, along with the other members of the senior leadership team, Tracy Livesey (MD, ISP, Orange Grove, Fosterplus and Clifford House Fostering), John Platt (MD Fostering People, ACS and Foster Care Associates), Nicola Thomas (Director of Quality and Learning), Rob Sanders (Head of HR), and Paul Surridge (Head of Business Development). Jo and Jonathan also remain on the Polaris main operational board, chaired by Paul Marriner.

One of the main function of the Directors and Operational Board is to ensure that the quality assurance standards of the Agency are maintained and of the highest standards. Routine audits are accepted as good practice, and they help to maintain budgets and keep the Agency financially viable. A significant priority is the retention of experienced staff to enable them to ensure our fostering families feel well supported.

CEO/Responsible Individual

Jo August is the Chief Executive Officer of Fosterplus and Responsible Individual:

At the very heart of our Polaris Community is a common aim where everyone is committed to enabling every child and young person in our care to reach their full potential. We are ambitious for ourselves and our children. I am exceptionally proud that I am surrounded by an inspirational team of staff and families who are completely committed to making a difference and achieving the best outcomes for children across the UK. I have the privilege of witnessing the difference being made by our community every single day and how as a team we have the opportunity to help shape the lives of the young people in our care and influence the future of our sector.

Jo August, Chief Executive Officer

Managing Director

The Managing Director of Fosterplus England is Tracy Livesey who has a wealth of experience and expertise in the fields of fostering and social care. Tracy has a good oversight as to ensuring Fosterplus offers a safe and effective service that incorporates children and young person's voices being heard, alongside their foster parents feeling valued and well supported. A significant part of Tracy's role as Managing Director is to advise the Registered Manager as to service development initiatives and policy and practice matters, also providing additional safeguarding advice when needed.

The Registered Manager

The Registered Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the Agency. Angela Turland is the Registered Manager of Fosterplus South, and has previously managed other Fostering, Childrens/Young People and Adoption Teams. The Registered Manager oversees the supervision of the staff group for both the main and sub-office teams. The Registered Manager ensures that all foster parents are properly supported, that the outcomes for children are met

through the implementation of the Agency's policies and procedures and is responsible for adhering to specific areas of legislation under the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Updated 2013). They are accountable to and reports to the Managing Director. The Registered Manager undertakes ongoing audits and monitoring of the service to ensure a fostering service of the highest standard. The Registered Manager also monitors and advises on serious complaints and allegations and ensures that appropriate procedures are followed, and safeguards are in place.

The Foster Panel Chair/ Foster Panel Advisor

This is a role independent of the Agency. The Chair ensures the efficacy and running of the Fostering Panel and as a result of the Panel's functions will advise the Agency on quality assurance and service standards issues. The role of the Panel is to consider applicants for approval and make recommendations on their suitability and terms of approval; consider the first review of approved foster foster parents and any subsequent reviews referred to it by Fosterplus; make recommendations on continued suitability and terms of approval; oversee the quality of assessments carried out by Fosterplus and monitor the efficacy of procedures for undertaking reviews; give advice and make recommendations on any other matters referred to the Panel by Fosterplus. Fosterplus has an experienced Panel Advisor who assists the Agency as to best practices being instilled and to ensure Fostering Panels meet regulatory requirements.

Supervising Social Workers (SSW)

We pride ourselves on our qualified and experienced Social Workers who are responsible for the direct implementation of the Agency's standards of the service through supporting our Foster parents and monitoring the progress of any child in placement. Supervising Social Workers also undertake on-call and duty functions to ensure that our foster parents are fully supported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

They are employed on a full / part time basis and are line managed by the Registered Manager. Supervising Social Workers attend meetings involving the child and foster parents(s) to ensure that they feel fully supported and that the child's needs are being met. Supervising Social Workers also carry out assessments on prospective Foster parents using the British Association for Adoption and Fostering Form F format, and Annual Reviews. They attend meetings with foster parents, and also social events, and over time get to know their families well. Their support in a crisis is often deemed invaluable and they are skilled in various parenting and therapeutic strategies.

Social Work Assistant

This position does not require a social work qualification, however post holders have other qualifications and experience of working directly with young people. They undertake some outreach and support work to foster parents in their day to day task of looking after children and young people. They also co-ordinate activities, support groups, social events and undertake age appropriate consultation with children and young people who are looked after and birth children. They can also assist in regard to health and safety checks and unannounced visits.

Administrators

Our Team Administrators provide vital administrative day to day support to our team by ensuring good communication streams, IT facilities, and general administrative support. They offer Charms/Recording Training to foster parents, and may attend support groups, or social events. They ensure families details are up to date and assist in audits and effective recording systems being maintained. We have a Senior Team Administrator that is also part of our Senior Leadership Team. They assist with Welcome Packs for young people, Data Sets for Ofsted and Regulation 35 reports.

Education Co-ordinator

Fosterplus is part of Polaris which employs a qualified and experienced teacher who is able to provide advice, support and guidance on educational issues for children looked after by Fosterplus. They offer valuable advice on Pupil Premium funding, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHP) and Personal Educational Plans (PEP's), also as to linking up effectively with various schools. Philippa Casson remains our current Educational Coordinator.

Therapy

When necessary Fosterplus can engage consultant therapists to support and work with foster parents in meeting the therapeutic needs of children and young people. We also have dedicated one to one trainers that can offer training on the use of specific therapeutic type strategies such as PRICE and PACE as to foster parents managing difficult behaviours.

Wider Group

In addition to permanent staff, Fosterplus has a pool of practitioners available who work on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of roles in the Agency e.g. Independent Form F Assessors, Sessional Social Workers, Medical Advisor and Independent Investigators for formal complaints. For all self-employed practitioners, Fosterplus ensures that verification of formal qualifications is assured and carries out the required checks and enquiries comparable to those of permanent staff, to ensure that welfare of children and young people is safeguarded and promoted.

Fosterplus South is supported by a central staff group, including Human Resources, Referral Team, Checks and References, Marketing and Recruitment, Finance, Panel Administration, Learning and Development, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Assessment Team and the Operational Board of Directors.

Process for Recruiting

Fosterplus aims to recruit applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, geographical locations, economic situations and from differing family compositions. This facilitates the Agency meeting its aspiration of providing the most suitable match to meet the needs of any child referred to the Agency. Potential applicants will not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or economic status. However, prospective Foster parents must be able to meet the holistic needs of any child placed within their approval categories.

Fosterplus South has a Recruitment Strategy which identifies how prospective foster parents are recruited through a number of methods. We advertise on our website and utilise social media. Prospective foster parents are also recruited through recommendations by our existing foster parents or staff employed by the Agency via an established Refer a Friend Scheme. Other modes of recruitment may include for example, advertisements placed in local press and leaflets are displayed in public places and venues such as stores and libraries. Fosterplus England also hosts monthly information evenings on-line for those interested in becoming foster parents.

All applicants who contact Fosterplus will have an initial enquiry (screening) completed over the telephone. This initial enquiry is twofold; it enables the Agency to share information about the role of foster parents, the children referred, the Agency support and training provided and the assessment process. It also provides an opportunity to gain insight into the enquirer's motivation to foster, their child care experience, family circumstances and whether the accommodation available has a spare bedroom for a foster child.

During the screening process, should enquirers demonstrate the potential to move to the next stage, they will be offered a virtual home visit to discuss fostering and have another opportunity to ask questions. The home visit allows for direct discussion with the enquirers and an opportunity to view the accommodation on offer to ensure that it is suitable for a foster child to live in safely and comfortably.

Process for Approving

To become a Fosterplus foster parent, all applicants must undergo a thorough assessment by a qualified Social Worker. This can take up to eight months to complete but it is the aim of Fosterplus to have this completed in a shorter timescale. However, in exceptional circumstances the term may vary but there is never a compromise on the quality of the assessment and the Agency's duty to secure the welfare of any child placed.

The process will include a detailed assessment of the applicant's background including their childhood, educational, work, life and parenting experiences, their values and attitudes to diversity and any specific skills they may have, e.g. working with disabilities and working with adolescents. Applicants will be expected to undertake Skills to Foster training prior to approval. Feedback from the training will be used as part of the assessment to provide reflective accounts which add to the evidence within the Form F.

As part of the assessment process applicants and members of their households must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the enhanced level. Certain offences preclude a person from caring for children. At least 3 personal / family references will be sought for each application. Other references will be sought from employers, professionals, previous partners and other statutory agencies known to the applicants. A minimum of two referees will be visited to verify the information provided in writing. The Agency uses these references to check the applicant's skills and experiences. Other enquiries will be made to assist in verifying the applicant's suitability. These include: - Local Authority checks, a health and safety inspection of the home and a full medical undertaken by their GP to ensure that applicants are fit for the role of a foster parents. The Agency uses the BAAF Form F report to evidence applicant's experiences and skills.

Once the Assessment Manager is satisfied that the applicant has the potential to be considered as a Foster parent, the Assessing Social Worker will carry out the assessment and complete a Form F report which will be presented to the Agency's Fostering Panel. After consideration, the Panel will make a recommendation on the information presented before them. The recommendation can either be approval, refusal or to defer the assessment to a later meeting to allow for further evidence to be provided. To assist the Panel in reaching a recommendation all applicants are expected to attend the Panel meeting with their Assessing Social Workers.

Once Panel has made a recommendation the application is passed to the Agency Decision Maker for the final decision to be made on the application. Applicants will be informed orally of the Decision Maker's decision within 2 working days, and written confirmation sent to them within 5 working days. For foster parents who have been approved they will also be sent a Foster Parents Agreement which will detail the terms and conditions of their approval.

All information is held on file in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Data Protection Act.

Process for Supporting

Fosterplus recognises that the quality of its services can only be met by having good quality Foster parents, who are well supported and trained.

Fosterplus has detailed [Policies and Procedures](#) on supporting and training of foster parents which are available to view via download from their secure online database, CHARMS. Alternatively paper copies can be requested.

In summary Fosterplus parents have access to:-

- 👤 An 'on call worker' 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- 👤 Regular monthly structured supervision from their social worker with interim visits as required.
- 👤 Support in meeting the child's education needs through their Supervising Social Worker and the Education Support Worker.
- 👤 Support from their Supervising Social Worker at professionals' meetings.
- 👤 Organised activities for children
- 👤 Frequent telephone calls to and from their Supervising Social Worker.
- 👤 Wilful Damage Insurance.
- 👤 Direct access to Senior Management.
- 👤 Regular programme of training delivered to meet foster parents' needs.
- 👤 Regular support group meetings.
- 👤 Becoming a member of a professional team of foster parents.
- 👤 Opportunities to be consulted on the function and operation of the Agency.
- 👤 Generous fostering allowance when a child is in placement.
- 👤 Paid respite care where appropriate.
- 👤 Pre and post approval training programme.
- 👤 Financial support to meet the material needs of the child or young person placed.
- 👤 Assistance in enrolling children in local schools, registering with GPs etc.
- 👤 Additional resources to support any child in placement.
- 👤 Individual membership to Foster Talk.
- 👤 Support to complete their TSDS Portfolio

Fosterplus recognises that the above supports on their own do not necessarily mean that a person feels well supported. By the nature of the role, Foster parents will face new, demanding and challenging situations. The aim is to equip foster parents with the skills to deal with the majority of situations, but safe in the knowledge that support is readily accessible, if it is required.

Once approval is given and all checks are complete, the household details will be entered onto the CHARMS system, which acts as a central register, and the foster parents(s) allocated to a Supervising Social Worker. Newly approved foster parents will have their own Profile, which includes pictures of them, other people who might live in their house, any pets, their house and garden and pictures of the fostering bedroom(s). They will also meet the Referrals Team who will explain the referral process to them in more detail and discuss what sort of placements might match with them best. Newly approved foster parents will be expected to undertake further induction training and complete their TSDS standards within their first year of fostering to evidence their learning and training.

Applicants in approval are asked if they would like to be linked to an experienced foster parent who either lives in their area or will be providing similar placements. Some applicants have taken this opportunity and found it invaluable, particularly when attending training or support groups as they have a face that they know.

Matching

Fosterplus will ensure that the needs of any children or young people already in placement with foster parents are fully considered and seek a placing alongside agreement from the Local Authority social worker, it's important to consider that the needs of all children will be met. The foster parents(s) will be consulted about any potential matches and their views sought on whether the potential placement is something they feel to be appropriate for the young person and their family. The Foster parents Form F assessment and Profile will be sent to Local Authorities to help with decision making and to establish the right match for the child/young person. Local Authorities may also request the latest Annual Foster Care Review report if applicable. We consider safeguarding issues, school and education needs, contact arrangements in relation to the foster parents overseeing contacts, foster parents approval terms, other family members or existing placements, proposed length of placement, foster parents training and skills, and location of placement.

Agency Model – Secure Base

Fosterplus continues to integrate and embed the Secure Base Model into daily practice and supporting Foster parents in their parenting approaches towards children. The goal of the Secure Base Model is to provide sensitive caregiving that develops secure, close and trusting relationships. The aim is to help children to recover from their previous harmful experiences and to develop their resilience and sense of stability to enhance their potential and to face future challenges in their lives. Training on the Secure Base Model is part of our Core Training programme provided to all foster parents.

Process for Reviewing Foster parents

All foster parents must undertake a Review at least annually. The first Review of a foster parents following their approval will be presented to the Fostering Panel. The Fostering Panel will also consider Reviews in relation to significant changes to a foster parents' circumstances and any concerns of Standards of Care or allegations involving foster parents.

The purpose of the Review is to ensure that the foster parents' terms of approval and indeed their approval remains appropriate. The Review will seek the views of any child who has been or is placed with the foster parents within the period under Review, any Local Authorities who have placed children with the foster parents, their Supervising Social Workers, the Foster parents and members of their household.

A written report will summarise the Review and make a clear recommendation on the outcome. The report will be submitted to the Fostering Panel where relevant for recommendation on continued approval and terms of approval. The final decision on the recommendation from each Review will be made by the Agency Decision Maker.









All foster parents will be fully involved in their Reviews and will have the opportunity to comment at any stage of the process.

Number of Children Placed

There are currently 31 children placed. Our Referrals Team place young children through to adolescents, sibling groups, and children with disabilities, to name a few. We also offer respite and bridging placements. We have a very low incidence of placement breakdowns, lower than the national average.

Outcomes

Fosterplus is dedicated to ensuring that children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes, including that they:

-  Are appropriately matched with a suitable family
-  Have good access to leisure and health services
-  Feel safe, not exploited or coerced in to unsafe situations
-  Attend education and achieve their full potential
-  Enjoy their experiences and develop self-confidence
-  Are involved in decisions about their life
-  Are supported to prepare for their future
-  Retain their links to family and friends

Complaints, Representations and Compliments

All children and young people placed with Fosterplus families have a right to be safe, protected and listened to. The children's guide explains who they might complain to if this doesn't happen or they have any issues to raise. This includes our helpline details: Ask Corrine – 07792263020 corrinesheward@fosterplus.co.uk. Visits from the child's social worker, the supervising social worker and social work assistants mean that children and young people see different people on a regular basis. Children and young people should have access to independent visitors, advocates and/or their IRO to help them to complain.

Fosterplus is committed to anti-bullying measures so foster parents are given advice and training on how to recognise the signs of bullying and strategies are offered on how to support children and young people and ensure foster parents can work effectively with them, social workers, and schools.

The Agency has a full Complaints, Representations and Compliments Policy and Procedure which is available on request or online via download from foster parent database, CHARMS.

It is the Agency's aim to deal with all complaints at the lowest appropriate level and whenever possible directly between the complainant and the subject of the complaint. However, it is recognised that this is not possible in all circumstances and there is a more formal process for making a complaint. The Agency welcomes feedback on its service standards to enable it to continually improve our service and supports offered. If a serious complaint is made about any employee of Fosterplus that is clearly of a child protection nature that complaint will be immediately passed onto the relevant Local Authority LADO and OFSTED will be informed.

Should a foster parents(s) experience a complaint we have established guidance and support systems in place for them to access such as Foster Talk and their supervising social worker is usually able to offer support. However, an independent social worker may be asked to carry out an independent investigation. All foster parents must receive a conclusion and summary of actions as to how the complaint was investigated and resolved.

In the year April 2020 – March 2021, Fosterplus South received 0 Complaints.

Fosterplus strives for a culture of openness and transparency with all employees, students, foster parents and sessional workers. The Agency has a Whistleblowing Policy, to encourage employees/workers to feel confident in raising genuine concerns about malpractice whilst maintaining their integrity, and to ensure whistle-blowers know their concerns will be taken seriously and not ignored.

Compliments or Complaints can be made directly to the Registered Manager or to the Director / Responsible Individual at Fosterplus Ltd, Wavendon Tower, Ortensia Drive, Milton Keynes, MK17 8LX. These can be made either in writing or verbally, however the Agency will always request that formal complaints are made in writing. Alternatively, Complaints can be submitted directly by e-mail to the Complaints Officer Sarah Wharrie at complaints@fosterplus.co.uk

Complaints about the Registered Manager can be made either to the Managing Director, Tracy Livesey or Responsible Individual, Joanne August, at the Wavendon Tower address, or directly to:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Rights Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Telephone: 0207 783 8330
info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Angela Turland - Registered Manager