

# **Fostering Service**

## **Statement of Purpose**

### **2017 - 2020**

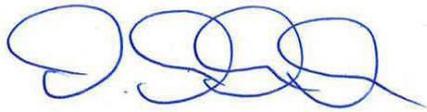
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The Enfield Fostering Service “Statement of Purpose” has been endorsed by the Director of Schools and Children’s Services and the Lead Member for Schools and Children’s Services on behalf of elected Members.



**Lead Member: Councillor Ayfer Orhan**



**Director: Tony Theodoulou**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Fostering Service is part of Enfield's Looked after Children's Services based within the Schools and Children's Services Department. The aim of the Fostering Service is to recruit and support a range of foster carers who can provide appropriate placements to meet the diverse needs of Enfield's children and young people.
- 1.2 The Fostering Service provides a range of skilled, approved foster carers who have been trained to provide safe and nurturing care for looked after children.
- 1.3 This Statement of Purpose is designed to meet the requirements of the Children Act 1989, The National Minimum Standards for Foster Care 2011, the Care Standards Act 2001, Care Planning Regulations 2010 and Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (2013). The fostering service seeks to promote the principles and practices enshrined in this legislation.

## **2.0 Guiding Principles**

- To put the child at the centre of what we do and support foster carers to do the same.
- To promote and safeguard the welfare of children throughout their childhood.
- To promote working partnership with children and their families.
- To ensure equality of opportunity.
- To ensure all children fulfil their potential in education
- To ensure that young people are supported to move into independence in a planned way.
- To ensure all children's health needs are met.
- To provide children with a caring, safe experience of living in families.
- To listen to children and young people and take their views into consideration.

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- To promote equality of opportunity, recognising and providing for each child and young person's ethnic, cultural and religious needs, ensuring that staff and carers value disability.
  - To work in an open and accessible way, treating children, young people, their families and carers with fairness and respect.
- 2.1 By working with a range of professionals, we aim to ensure that children and young people and their carers are provided with the services and support to meet their needs.
- 2.2 We do not discriminate against applicants on the grounds of gender, religion, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background, nationality, disability and sexual orientation.
- 2.3 We recruit carers on the basis of the needs of the department and the children it looks after, setting annual targets.
- 2.4 We treat our foster carers with respect, recognising that they are a core member of the team around the child with an important contribution to make in planning and decision making about the child.
- 2.5 The Fostering Service is committed to improving outcomes for children and will actively promote and improve the life chances of children we look after.
- 2.6 We value carers' own children and extended family and the support they offer to looked after children.
- 2.7 Enfield recognises that foster carers are valuable members of the team working with a child. As such, they are involved in all aspects of caring and planning for children they are looking after.

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### **3.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide safe, secure and effective fostering placements for those looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth families.
- 3.2 Foster care is a partnership between a foster carer, a supervising social worker and the child's social worker, all working together with the child's birth family and other relevant professionals as a team to help the child to reach their full potential.
- 3.3 The cultural, religious, racial and linguistic identities of children, their parents and carers must be respected in the development of the foster care service and in making, supervising and supporting placements.
- 3.4 Children and young people have the right to continuity in their lives in order to enable them to develop and maintain positive self-esteem and identity; promote their physical and mental well-being and achieve their full potential.
- 3.5 The true cost of caring for a foster child or young person must be met and foster carers given the opportunity to receive payment for their time, skills and experience.
- 3.6 Foster carers are expected to prepare for their role and are responsible for making use of development and training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.
- 3.7 Foster carers, foster carers' children, social workers and looked after children must be able to call on the agency for support.
- 3.8 Formal decisions relating to individual children in foster care should be taken in consultation with them, their parents and the foster carers.

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- 3.9 Foster carers, social workers, birth family members, looked after children and the children of foster carers must be given the opportunity to record their views and feedback about placements.
- 3.10 Foster carers, birth family members, children and young people should be able to challenge decisions and plans proposed by the Fostering Service and be made aware of how to make a complaint.
- 3.11 Young people leaving care must be offered agency support that recognises that all young people need preparation and support into adulthood.

#### **4.0 The Structure of the Fostering Service**

4.1 The Fostering Service is part of the Schools and Children's Directorate and provides services to looked after children and foster carers.

4.2 The overall management of the service is the responsibility of the Fostering Service Manager, Debbie Michael, details as follows:

Debbie Michael

Service Manager for Fostering & Adoption

Triangle House

305-313 Green Lanes

London, N13 4YB

Telephone: 020 8379 8480

Email: [Debbie.Michael@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Debbie.Michael@enfield.gov.uk)

Qualifications: HNC Public Administration, DipSW & Certificate in Higher Education, Certificate in Management Studies.

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The Head of Service for overall responsibility for the Looked After Children's Service is Linda Hughes, details as follows:

Linda Hughes

Head of Service for LAC

Triangle House

305-313 Green Lanes

London, N13 4YB

Telephone: 020 8379 8222

Email: [Linda.Hughes@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.Hughes@enfield.gov.uk)

Qualifications: CQSW, DMS, MA Health & Social Care, MSc Public Sector Commissioning.

The three Deputy Team Managers within the Fostering Service manage a daily duty system and have supervisory responsibility for the team members in the Service. The three deputy managers are:

Renee Powell (Recruitment & Assessment Team)

Telephone: 020 8379 1209

Email: [Renee.Powell@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Renee.Powell@enfield.gov.uk)

Siew Tan (Support & Development Team)

Telephone: 020 8379 2889

Email: [Siew.Tan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Siew.Tan@enfield.gov.uk)

Reina Fraser (Support & Development Team)

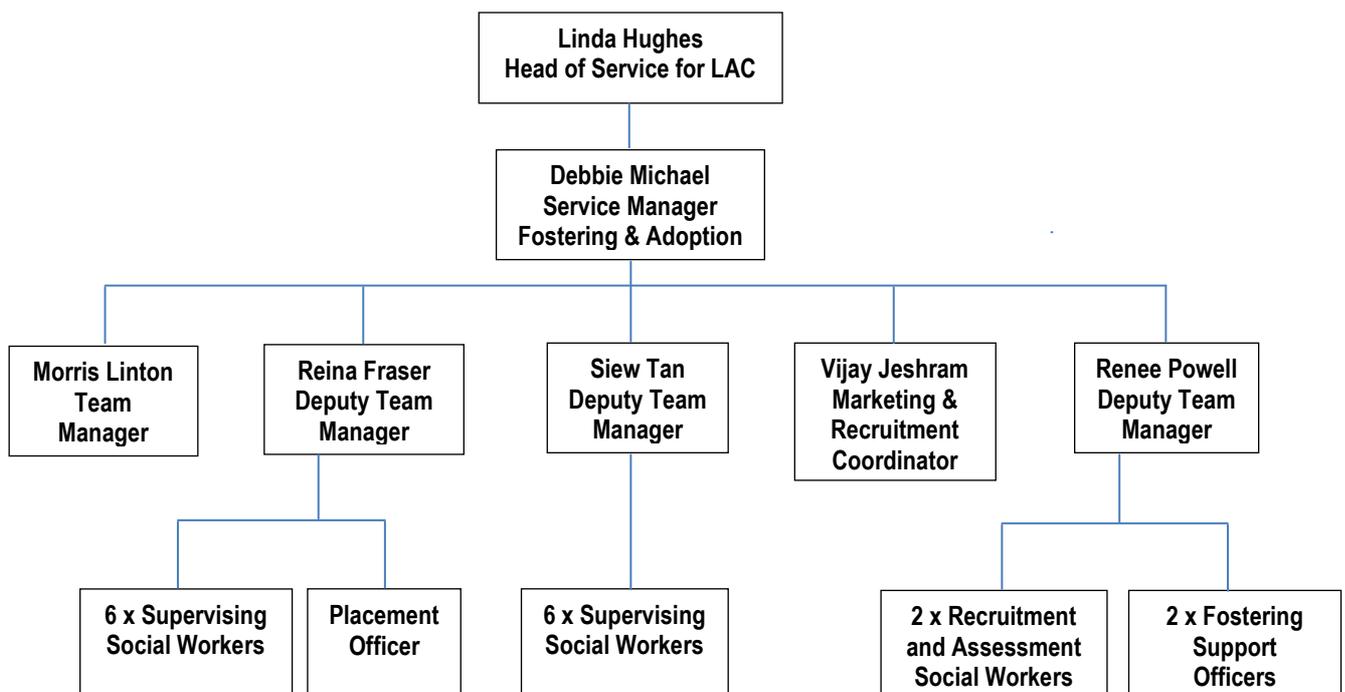
Telephone: 020 8379 8272

Email: [Reina.Fraser@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Reina.Fraser@enfield.gov.uk)

- 4.3 Social work staff in the Fostering Service are professionally qualified with the relevant social work qualifications and are HCPC registered. In addition to social workers, the Service employs Fostering Support Officers who have a crucial role in the recruitment and initial training of foster carers.

- 4.4 All staff members have up to date DBS checks which are kept on personnel files and are available for inspection by the appropriate inspectors and managers on request. Staff members receive regular supervision and Performance Annual Reviews.
- 4.5 The areas of specialism within the fostering service are 2-fold: recruitment and assessment of foster carers; and support and development of foster carers. Staff members are suitably experienced in their areas of specialism. The administrative support to the service is provided by staff under the management of a Business Support Manager and the panel coordination and minute takers by staff managed by the Operational Support Manager. The Marketing and Recruitment Officer serves both the fostering and the adoption services and works closely with consortium counterparts in promoting and raising awareness on fostering and adoption. The Fostering Service continues to deliver an exemplary service with its wealth of experience and knowledge.

4.6 Fostering Service Structure Chart



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## 5.0 Cross Service Links

5.1 The Fostering Service maintains the following links:

- The Children in Need and Looked After Children's Service in relation to requests for foster placements and making Regulation 24 placements.
- The Adoption Service in relation to foster carers whose children are moving on to adoption or Special Guardianship placements.
- Cheviots Children's Centre who hold specialist knowledge of work with children with disabilities and have a large group of foster carers in their Shared Care Scheme.
- The Children in Care Council and KRATOS to ensure views of children and young people are listened to and to assist in service planning.
- The family centres who work with our foster carers and children to support parental contact.
- The Leaving Care Service relating to teenage placements, pathway planning and transition to independence.
- Corporate links, including safeguarding training, procurement, complaints, finance, marketing, press and publicity.
- Health to promote the health care needs of looked after children and assessing the health of foster carers for initial and continued approval.

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- Education in promoting the educational needs and achievements of children in foster care, as well as links with the Virtual School Team in the use of the Pupil Premium Fund and PEPs.
  - Housing in cases where foster carers need support with applying for the foster carers' nomination scheme and when bidding for larger properties.
  - North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium which is very active in developing joint services to meet the needs of children and their foster carers across the six boroughs.
  - HEART (Health, Education, Access to Resources Team) who provides generic and specific advice and training for foster carers to promote better outcomes for looked after children and young people.
  - CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service) as part of HEART who provide a 7 day response to requests to work with looked after children and provide advice and support to foster carers about the child they look after.
  - The Fostering Network whereby foster carers become automatic subscribers to following their approval. The Fostering Network provide a service to foster carers nationally to ensure all fostered children have a positive experience of family life, supporting them to have high aspirations, to overcome challenges of their early lives and to achieve their very best.
  - Coram/BAAF who amalgamated and provide a wealth of information, advice and support to foster carers and adopters.

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## **6.0 What is Fostering?**

6.1 Fostering involves caring for children in the foster carers' home whilst their parents are unable to look after them.

6.2 It is often a temporary arrangement whilst issues relating to the child's family are being address. It can also be a long-term arrangement if there are no plans for the child to return home and if there are no family members or friends who are suitable to look after the child.

## **7.0 Reasons for Children Being Fostered**

7.1 Abuse by parents or other significant members of the family

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect

7.2 Parents' medical illness or mental health issues contribute to children needing to be fostered.

7.3 Domestic abuse in the family home which children may witness between their parents or directly experience.

7.4 Drugs or alcohol abuse resulting in parents' inability to provide good enough and consistent care to their children.

7.5 Parents struggling to cope with their child's behaviour, illness, learning disability or physical disability.

7.6 Unaccompanied minors entering the country.

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## **8.0 Types of Foster Care**

### **8.1 Short Term Fostering:**

This type of placement can last a few days to several years. Short term foster carers look after a child for a period of time, often whilst court proceedings are in process to determine whether it is suitable for the child to return home. This may involve parents or other family members undergoing assessments about whether they are to provide safe and consistent care to the child. In other cases parents voluntarily agree to their children being in care and particularly, in all cases, the department works in partnership with parents. At the end of the placement children are likely to return home or be placed with other family members, or with long-term foster carers or adopters. Being a short-term foster can be rewarding as foster carers play a key role in helping children through difficult times.

### **8.2 Permanent/Long-Term Fostering:**

Where it has been decided that a child cannot return home and adoption is not possible, a long-term fostering placement is another option in securing permanency for a child. Children will remain there until they are at least 18 years, unless a 'Staying Put' arrangement has been considered, then they can remain with foster carers until they reach the age of 21. When young people remain beyond 18 this is an arrangement that is mutually agreed between all parties, including you people and foster carers and financial payments to the foster carers continue. This enables children to thrive in a stable home and for foster carers to develop strong, rewarding relations with children and young people on a more permanent basis and to prepare them towards independence. There are 2 definitions of 'long term' i.e. the carer has been formally matched to the child in placement or the child's care plan is for long-term fostering with their current carer AND has been in placement for over a year. In a long-term foster placement the carers will be visited at least every twelve weeks.

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### **8.3 Respite Care:**

As a respite carer, a foster carer would work in partnership with birth parents and short or long-term carers to provide weekend, holiday or support care on a regular, one off or intermittent basis, depending on the plans for the child. Respite care is about looking after a child to support the birth family or foster carers.

### **8.4 Family and Friends/Connected Persons Foster Carers:**

A child being cared for by the local authority goes to live with someone they already know, usually a family member. Family and Friends foster carers are subject to the same foster care Regulations and Standards as regular foster carers.

### **8.5 Parent and Child Fostering:**

These placements are time-limited and are specifically for young parent(s) and their child. A carer would provide support and guidance and help them to develop good parenting skills. This type of placement allows the child and their parent to stay in their local area, offering them stability and consistency in their lives, whilst assessments are taking place.

### **8.6 Short Breaks Scheme:**

The short breaks scheme for children with disabilities is managed by the Cheviots Children with Disabilities Service, although the carers in the scheme are approved and reviewed by Enfield's Fostering Panel.

## **9.0 Services Provided by Enfield's Fostering Service**

### **9.1 The Recruitment and Assessment Team**

9.2 The Recruitment and Assessment Team aims to recruit foster carers who are able to meet the wide range of needs of the children coming into Enfield's care. The team is led by a fostering deputy team manager and seeks to maintain a high public profile in the local community to encourage diverse local interest in fostering.

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## **10.0 Recruitment**

- 10.1 A Marketing & Recruitment Officer works within the service producing leaflets, seeking the most appropriate methods of advertising the service and encouraging local people from a wide range of backgrounds to apply to become foster carers.
- 10.2 Information on fostering is available from both the Enfield Council website and the North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium website.
- 10.3 All members of the public interested in finding out more about fostering have the opportunity to attend information sessions and events facilitated by members of Enfield's fostering service. Experienced foster carers are also present at these sessions and events which gives potential applicants the opportunity to find out what it is like to foster from approved foster carers that are already doing this.
- 10.4 Expressions of interest and/or enquirers will be treated as a potential resource and will receive a response from a fostering social worker within 2 working days. They will be contacted, usually by telephone, to gather further information and for a general discussion about fostering and what they may have to offer. Face-to-face meetings are also an option for people that prefer this method of information gathering at the initial enquiry stage.
- 10.5 All people wishing to pursue their interest in fostering will be sent an information pack within 5 working days of their enquiry.
- 10.6 An initial home visit is offered to people wishing to progress to speak with everyone living in the household about fostering, including any children or young people in the household. During the initial visit, the social worker will look around the home, in particular the room identified for fostering, to see if it is a suitable environment for a child and to ensure that there are no health and safety hazards in the home.

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10.7 The Fostering Network 'Skills to Foster' training programme for prospective foster carers is delivered by Enfield's Fostering Service or by a fostering service from one of the consortium boroughs (if applicants are unable to make the Enfield training programme). On completion of the 3-day training programme, applicants are invited to attend a 'feedback interview' with the trainers and if all agree it is appropriate, the applicants will be invited to formally apply to foster.

## **11.0 Recruiting Enfield Foster Carers**

11.1 Enfield's Fostering Service is committed to recruiting more foster carers to meet the needs of looked after children requiring a foster placement.

11.2 Enfield's Fostering Service offers help, encouragement, support and guidance in assisting prospective foster carers in every aspect of the application process. Everyone interested in becoming a foster carer will be welcomed without prejudice and given clear written information about the preparation, assessment and approval process. Applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering process.

11.3 Enfield's aim is to increase its pool of foster carers whom we can turn to as alternative families for our looked after children. Enfield's recruitment and assessment activities aim to secure foster carers of the highest calibre ready to provide the stable family environment that children need throughout their childhood and beyond.

11.4 Enfield is a diverse London borough. The children needing placements will have a range of racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Enfield's Fostering Service aims to recruit people from a wide range of backgrounds, in order to meet the individual needs of children in our care. This means targeting a broad mix of people from different ethnic origins, religions, single people as well as couples, people who have never had children, but enjoy caring and working alongside them, and people whose own children have grown up and left home.

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- 11.5 Where possible, we try to keep children in Enfield's care close to their family, friends and community networks, and to existing resources such as schools, doctor surgeries etc. Therefore the need for foster carers who live in or close to the borough remains a priority.
- 11.6 Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a challenge for all local authorities nationally. Neighbouring local authorities will often be competing with each other for the same pool of people which is more prevalent amongst the smaller geographical authorities in the London region. There will also be competition from independent fostering agencies that work both regionally and nationally and who can, in some cases, offer a more attractive support/financial package.

## **12.0 Myths and Assumptions**

- 12.1 There are many myths and assumptions about fostering, such as age, single status and other lifestyle concerns, which prevent many individuals from pursuing an enquiry. Therefore, any marketing strategy must clearly demystify the myths associated with fostering and be transparent about the eligibility criteria.
- 12.2 Research has identified the key reasons to become foster carers as:
- having something to offer
  - enjoying caring for children
  - own childhood experiences in care
  - awareness of need for foster carers
  - suits current family circumstances
  - option to create/extend own family
  - own children have grown up/moved away

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Research has also concluded that key reasons for continuing to foster include:

- a sense of satisfaction
- seeing children progress
- love for the child
- a sense of fulfilment
- doing something worthwhile
- making a difference to a child's life

### **13.0 Recruitment Strategy**

13.1 To maximise the impact from the communications and marketing materials we produce, we will ensure that information about fostering for Enfield is eye-catching clear and accessible. Enfield's many and varied local media will be utilised as a primary source of public information and knowledge about fostering in Enfield, This will involve the use of all platforms, including print, advertising, outreach and digital media so that we:

- establish a rolling programme of media advertising around key dates or events
- consolidate the Service's online presence through their website, social media and other channels
- establish a rolling programme of events, information sessions and outreach opportunities
- target internal staff, local community groups, job centre and education establishments
- expand on existing foster carer links and encourage them to recommend a family member or friend

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- 13.2 The campaign directed towards internal staff members will consist of several outreach events and ensure all Council buildings display information about fostering at identifiable strategic points where staff meet or regularly walk by.
- 13.3 We will continue to work with other neighbouring boroughs in the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Barnet and Haringey) on a collaborative marketing strategy. This will deliver a regional marketing campaign for the recruitment of foster carers and content for the Consortium website and social media platforms.
- 13.4 Prospective foster carers will be targeted with online communications in an effort to raise awareness and dispel the myths surrounding fostering. Email bulletins will continue alongside a new digital marketing campaign.
- 13.5 We will target areas in the borough with the highest proportion of large houses and thus potential for having spare rooms to dedicate to fostering. An exercise to map our existing network of foster carers may help with this but can also identify any cluster groups of carers to inform future marketing activity.
- 13.6 The activities in Enfield's fostering marketing and recruitment action plan for 2017-2018 aims to maintain a high profile for Enfield's Fostering Service and increase the number of prospective foster carers moving through the recruitment process. People who may wish to take up fostering will be provided with sufficient and timely information, either through information sessions or upcoming events across the borough. More in-house foster carers also provides more opportunities for sibling groups to remain together, teenagers to remain closer to home, for children to be given choice and to improve placement stability.

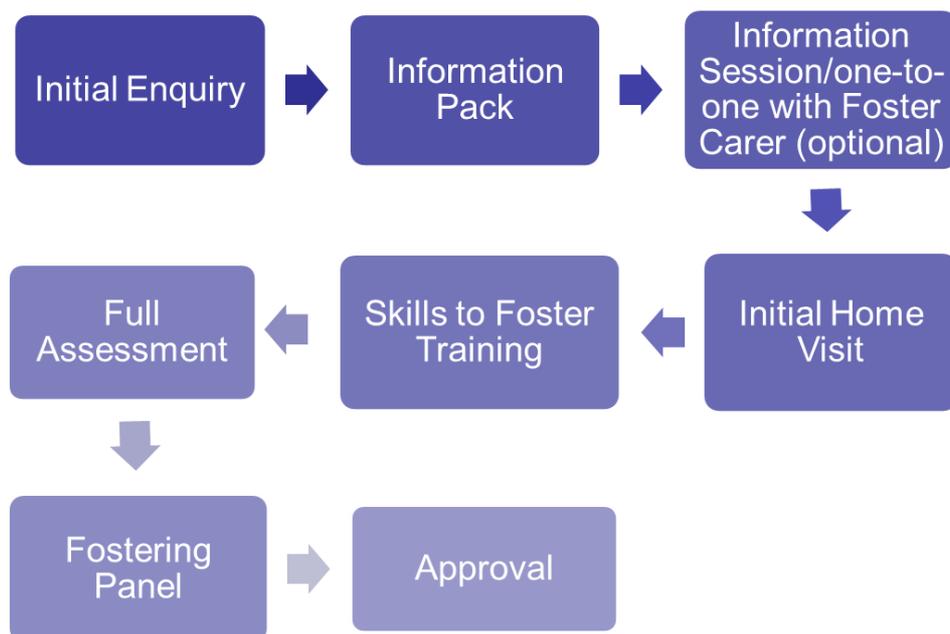
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## 14.0 Assessment & Approval Process

14.1 The assessment process consists of 2 parts. These can be carried out concurrently.

- **Stage 1:** Initial enquiry, initial visit, 3-day preparation training, statutory checks and interview of referees.
- **Stage 2:** Full assessment. This consists of 7 – 10 visits to the home by a social worker. The assessment takes approximately 4 months to complete. Household members are also interviewed.

### 14.2 Assessment & Approval Process Flowchart



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## **15.0 What Makes a Good Foster Carer?**

- Individuals or couples who are flexible and resilient and who are able to adapt their parenting style according to the needs of the child.
- A positive, caring and supportive foster placement will be the most important factor in helping foster children to overcome the difficulties they have faced in their lives and to achieve good outcomes.

## **16.0 Why Become a Foster Carer?**

- Fostering give the opportunity to help a child in need to develop and thrive.
- Fostering enables a person to work from home and to develop professional skills through the various ongoing training opportunities provided.
- An allowance to care for the child, in addition to a skills fee for the foster carer.
- Support and guidance provided and opportunities to meet and network with other foster carers for mutual support.

## **17.0 Assessment Criteria**

- Spare room (to be able to fit a bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers and a desk for the child to do homework).
- Availability to give time and attention to the child.
- Having support from family and friends helpful.

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## **18.0 Form F Assessment**

18.1 The assessing social worker will use the BAAF Form F assessment as the framework for assessing the suitability of applicants to become an approved foster carer. Only those people who have the real potential to offer a placement to a looked after child will be assessed.

18.2 The fostering assessment (Form F) will explore the following:

- The prospective foster carers' background including childhood and experiences of being parented.
- Previous and current relationships
- Health, education and employment
- Child care experience, parenting capacity and capacity to foster
- Ability to sustain positive relationships during time of stress
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Commitment to training and development

18.3 During the assessment process a second opinion visit will be undertaken by another assessing social worker to assure the quality of the assessment. The Fostering Service reserves the right to reject an application or stop an assessment at any point during the process if it becomes apparent that the applicants are not suitable.

## **19.0 The Fostering Panel**

19.1 On completion of the foster carers' assessment the social worker prepares a written report about the applicants' suitability to foster children. This is shared with and signed by the applicants and quality assured by the manager. The final copy is sent to the Fostering Panel to consider a recommendation for approval. The assessing social worker accompanies the applicants to the fostering panel to present the case.

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- 19.2 The Fostering Panel is a group of people with considerable experience of fostering and childcare. The composition of the panel is regulated by the Fostering Agency Regulations and has to include a minimum of two independent members.
- 19.3 The panel members will have questions about the assessment report, which they will put to your social worker and yourself, and after the discussion they will arrive at a recommendation, which goes to the Agency Decision Maker, who makes the final decision as to your suitability to foster. The Decision Maker is a Senior Officer in the Local Authority. In Enfield, this is the Children's Service Assistant Director.
- 19.4 If the Agency Decision Maker decides that the applicants are not suitable to foster, the applicants can make representations to the agency asking them to review their determination. In England, as an alternative, applicants can request that an independent body, the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), can undertake this review and make a recommendation to the agency. Again, the Agency Decision-Maker will make a decision either upholding the original decision or refer the case back to the fostering panel for a review of their recommendation.

## **20.0 The Support and Development Teams**

### **20.1 Approval and Support to Foster Carers**

Following approval, all foster carers have a named supervising social worker who provides regular supervision and supports the carer's professional development. The Fostering Service offers a first year of induction for all newly approved foster carers to provide additional advice and guidance as carers make the transition into their new role.

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- 20.2 Placements which are vulnerable to the risk of breakdown are closely monitored by supervising social workers and managers. Placement stability meetings take place to agree the additional support required to prevent children experiencing unnecessary moves. In-Step is a CAMHS led initiative which seeks to support placements which are deemed to be at risk of breakdown. A member of the team around the child will identify that there is a risk and a coordinated intervention will take place involving support for the carers and young people by a CAMHS worker and care coordinator. This intervention is reviewed regularly.
- 20.3 A programme of small focus groups for foster carers has been developed and are facilitated by a CAMHS child psychotherapist. The aim of these groups is to reduce placement breakdowns by helping carers to consider the likely challenges in caring for more complex children and to develop strategies for managing these successfully.
- 20.4 In many circumstances, visits to carers will continue to take place at intervals of 4-6 weeks. SSWs will increase their visits and contact if deemed necessary by either party. If a carer is 'resting' or unavailable to take a placement then telephone contact every 4-6 weeks can take the place of a face-to-face visit. The carer will need to be visited before they return to the fostering task.
- 20.5 The frequency of visits will always be determined by the circumstances of each case and no changes should be made to current practice without agreement from managers within the fostering service.
- 20.6 In the event of an allegation being made against a foster carer, the Fostering Service will offer support to foster carers and provide independent social work support during any investigation. Any foster carer going through an investigation process will be reminded of these supports at the earliest opportunity. The manager of the Fostering Service is responsible for ensuring that foster carers receive the support they require.

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20.7 All Enfield foster carers have Fostering Network membership fees paid by the Fostering Service which entitles carers to free independent advice and legal representation. Carers can also access information through the Fostering Network helpline.

### **21.0 Fostering Allowances**

Foster carers are paid a weekly maintenance allowance and an additional skills fee in recognition of the work undertaken with the children placed with them. In order to receive the additional fee, carers have to undertake and engage in a range of training which is available via Enfield's Training & Development Service. The fee recognises the additional skills they need in order to look after a child in care. The allowances paid to Enfield foster carers are detailed in the Fostering Service Finance Policy which is reviewed on a regular basis.

### **22.0 Enfield Fostering Association**

All foster carers automatically become members of the EFA following their approval. The EFA is in the early stages of being redeveloped with growing numbers joining the group. Plans for the EFA include:

- Forming a buddying system
- Work with the department on behalf of foster carers
- Help carers to get to know each other and build support networks
- Hold social events for foster carers, the children they look after and foster carers' families
- Take up issues on behalf of carers if they need support
- Keep carers updated with changes/news within the department

### **23.0 Foster Carers' Support Group**

The Foster Carers' Support Group is an established group run by experienced foster carers. It provides a forum for foster carers to consider practice issues, problems they may be facing and support strategies during times of difficulties.

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23.1 The Chair of the support group, Trudy Pye, also has the role as a Foster Carer Co-ordinator and maintains excellent links with the fostering service enabling good channels of communication between foster carers and the department. Trudy is available to speak to carers via phone, email or visit if needed, to offer support. Trudy also assists professionals with Induction Groups for new carers, Training, Development and Support Workshops and advises carers on completing their TDS workbooks.

#### **24.0 Annual Reviews of Foster Carers**

24.1 The Fostering Placements Regulations require that foster carers are annually reviewed to consider their suitability to continue as approved foster carers. The SSWs are responsible for completing the annual review process. Additional reviews can be completed at any time if there is a change of circumstances or as directed by the Fostering Panel or Fostering Service Manager.

24.2 The annual review is an evidence based process designed to make a fair appraisal of the work of foster carers and to identify any development needs or areas of concern about the foster carer's work. Children placed and their social workers are also invited to contribute to this process in writing.

24.3 Reviews are presented to the Fostering Panel after the first year following their approval and every three years thereafter. Where there has been a serious allegation or complaint, the review will return to Panel sooner.

24.4 There is a clear policy and procedure for undertaking foster carer reviews with a tracking system so that reviews take place within the annual time scale. The meeting is chaired by an Advanced Social Work Practitioner with specific responsibility for reviews and quality assurance.

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## **25.0 Training and Development**

- 25.1 A comprehensive training and development programme is available for all carers which has been designed to offer the flexibility to meet the needs of the foster carer workforce. In addition to day time taught courses, Learning opportunities are available during the day, evenings and at weekends, as well as on line.
- 25.2 Training and development events also enable foster carers to meet with other carers, share experiences and develop their knowledge and skills. Continuous professional development training is available through an annual programme which offers training for all carers, including family and friends/connected persons foster carers. All Enfield foster carers are expected to undertake four days or the equivalent of training each year which should include some face-to-face training. Identifying individual training needs will form part of the regular discussions between foster carers and their SSWs. Certificates are issued on completion of a course.
- 25.3 Bi annual development days are held with foster carers, members of the looked after children service and CAMHS practitioners who come together in a multi-disciplinary forum to consider developmental issues.

## **26.0 Social Networking and Internet Safety**

- 26.1 Social networking sites have already had an impact on many children/YP and their foster families and have the potential to affect many more. Increasingly, young people are using the internet often putting themselves at risk without realising it. The department takes this issue seriously and training is delivered to foster carers that offer practical advice, information and resources on internet safety to enable them to better protect children and young people on a range of electronic devices and communication formats. By the end of the training, participants will:

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- Become familiar with the internet sites and electronic communication that young people frequently visit and use.
  - Be equipped to recognise unsafe or unsuitable behaviour from using the internet and be able to identify strategies to ensure safe caring.
  - Have awareness of cyber bullying, sexting and on-line grooming, together with knowledge of organisations able to assist victims of these crimes.
  - Have gained an awareness of the range of computer games readily available to young people and to be able to recognise the risks that some of these games can present to them.

## **27.0 The North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium**

27.1 The NLAFC develops an annual action plan which involves the six boroughs – Enfield, Barnet, Camden, Hackney, Haringey and Islington. The consortium boroughs work together sharing training, recruitment activities and fostering placements for looked after children. It meets regularly at both a strategic Heads of Service level as well as an operational level.

## **28.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Complaints Procedure**

28.1 All services are monitored and evaluated using the following processes:

- Foster Carers Reviews
- Looked After Children Review of Arrangements
- Early Care Planning and Placement Panel Monitoring System
- Feedback from participants on the Skills to Foster Preparation Groups, Induction Groups and Training & Development courses.
- Feedback from Support Groups and the EFA
- Feedback from Panel Users
- Annual Panel Report from the Independent Chair of the Fostering Panel.

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28.2 All foster carers can access the Council's complaints procedure, which they can use, should they be dissatisfied with the quality of services received. The Fostering Service is committed to providing a high quality service and to learn from comments and complaints. Foster carers are encouraged to contact the Fostering Team in the first instance where every attempt will be made to address their issues.

28.3 Foster carers are given information about their rights to attend the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), in such cases where the assessing social worker is unable to recommend that they are suitable to foster and where the Fostering Panel upholds this recommendation, should the foster carers wish to be presented to Panel.

## **29.0 Who to Contact**

### **29.1 Ofsted**

This is the regulatory body for Fostering Agencies. They inspect against the National Minimum Standards for the Fostering Service to make sure that the service we give is of the best possible quality and that it meets the needs of our looked after children. Ofsted also check that providers of social care services comply with legislative requirements. Ofsted can be contacted at:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester, M1 2WD

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

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## 29.2 The Children's Rights Director for England

The Office of The Children's Rights Director for England make sure that young people who live away from home, or who are receiving social care support, have a say on issues that are important to them, as well as advising on children's rights and issues that will make life better for them.

They can be contacted as follows:

Office of the Children's Rights Director

Ofsted

Aviation House

125 Kingsway

London, WC2B 6SE

Email: [theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk)

Web: [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

## 29.3 KRATOS

KRATOS is made up of children in care and care leavers who meet regularly to make changes and improve services for others in care. Being part of KRATOS gives children and young people a voice and influence.

To find out more, contact:

Peri Louise Revan

Targetted Youth Engagement Worker

Youth & Family Support Service

Unit 9

Claverings Industrial Estate

Centre Way

Edmonton, N9 OAP

Email: [perilouise.revan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:perilouise.revan@enfield.gov.uk)

Mobile: 07506 747 430

Telephone: 020 8379 8034

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#### **29.4 Coram Voice**

Coram Voice is an advocacy service for children and young people to get their voices heard and empower them. They can be contacted as follows:

Coram Voice

Gregory House

Coram Campus

49 Mecklenburgh Square

London, WC1N 2QA

Email: [info@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@coramvoice.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7833 5792

#### **29.5 Contact Us**

Please contact us for any further information:

Enfield Fostering Service

The London Borough of Enfield

Triangle House

305-313 Green Lanes

London, N13 4YB

Email: [fostering@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@enfield.gov.uk)

Web: [www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 8379 2814