



Statement of Purpose



C^o N^o: 08247567

Ofsted URN: SC462226

ICO Registered

01424 211122

Office@5fostering.o.uk



positive partnerships ~ fostering resilience

We would be pleased to provide this document in alternative formats upon request e.g. electronically, alternative language, or spoken word in an audio file etc.

5Fostering,
School House,
Mill Bank Farm,
Top Road,
Hooe,
Nr Battle,
East Sussex.
TN33 9HA

If travelling, please use

 What3Words: inherit.heartened.marsh

Our office is part of Mill Bank Farm that overlooks the beautiful Pevensey marshes.

It was originally built as a modern open plan classroom with carpeted areas and washable floor areas.

Incorporated in the building is a kitchenette, male, female and accessible toilets, and it is fully alarmed for fire and intrusion.

It is a versatile building and, although some staff may work from home from time to time, it is timetabled to be used for administration, workshops, training, celebrations and social events for staff members and carers, and to facilitate birth family contact.

Before 5Fostering took the building it has been used for a wide variety of purposes including to teach organic farming to Chinese farmers, and as a recording studio for Katie Melua.

1. Contents

- 1. Contents..... 3
- 2. Introduction..... 4
- 3. Principles..... 4
 - i. Our Ethos 4
 - ii. Our Mission for 5Fostering 4
 - iii. Our Statutory Compliance..... 5
 - iv. Why do we do it?..... 6
- 4. Our Agency..... 7
 - i. Organisational Management Structure 7
 - ii. 3.2. Key People..... 8
 - iii. 3.3. Services we provide. 10
 - iv. Services we provide or arrange for children and young people. 11
 - v. Services we provide for Carers. 12
 - vi. Training and Outreach Services 13
- 5. Approval process to become a 5Fostering carer..... 14
 - i. Step 1: Enquiry 14
 - ii. Step 2: Home visit & Application form 14
 - iii. Step 3: (Form F Part 1) Records and Identity checks..... 14
 - iv. Step 4: Induction Training (including 'Skills to Foster') 15
 - v. Step 5: Midway review Stage 1 Review 15
 - vi. Step 6: (Form F part 2) Assessment and interviews/references 15
 - vii. Stage 7: Decision of the Panel..... 16
 - viii. Stage 8: Approval..... 16
 - ix. Diagram of 5Fostering approval pathway..... 18
- 6. Referral process 19
- 7. Care and Placement plans, and Outcomes Tracking. 19
- 8. Standards of care and National Minimum Standards..... 20
- 9. Safeguarding 20
- 10. Fire safety 20
- 11. Inclusion 21
- 12. Compliments and Complaints 22
- 13. Closing comments 23

2. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose provides information to those that need it such as the children and young people (C&YP) we care for, staff, carers, parents, social workers, and other stakeholders. We pride ourselves on being reflective practitioners and would welcome any feedback on this document or our service in general.

This document describes:

- our aims as an agency,
- how you can contact us,
- our philosophy and ethos,
- the services that we offer,
- our management structure and staff, and
- how we adhere to standards of care and other legal requirements.

This document is publicly available and provided to members of Ofsted, our carers and those in our care, Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), staff, and stakeholders of our services. Alternative more accessible versions are provided for younger children placed in our care, entitled 'My5' which is aimed to provide for Key Stage 1&2 and Key Stage 3&4 children and young people.

We review this Statement of Purpose at least every year, so if you have any suggestions how we can improve it, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone, text or email.

3. Principles

i. Our Ethos

We aim to reflect the accepting, inclusive and supportive nature of an extended family. We believe that enabling carers to develop resilience in children and young people (C&YP) inspired by the Secure Base model (and its 5 elements) is a key aim for our fostering. We do this by supporting carers with tailored training, positive partnerships, rigorous attention to quality and a 24hr helpline staffed by professionals including those who have been foster carers.

ii. Our Mission for 5Fostering

Our mission is for equality of access for the benefit of every child and young person in our care to

- To provide an **effective, safe** fostering service
- for children and young people that **they** would wish for,
- that builds on carers' personal **experience**,
- uses **blended** tailored training and
- an ethos of striving for better **practice** to
- develop critical yet supportive, radical yet reflective **parenting partnerships**
- between **children**, young people and their **carers**,

- between carers in **support** of each other,
- with agency staff and other **professionals**, that will
- provide a **safe, secure, stimulating, environment**,
- that is **nurturing** and engaging to those in our care,
- so that we may **raise** their achievement,
- engender a **Secure Base**,
- build **attachment** and **resilience** to
- manage the trauma of their **past**,
- enable children to excel in the **present**,
- and **later** make a positive contribution, and be
- the **parent** their own family will be **proud** of.
- And have **fun** while doing this.

iii. Our Statutory Compliance

This document outlines the way 5Fostering adheres to its obligations regarding the following statutes originally taken from Fostering Network's description of fostering legislation¹:

Children Act 1989: This is the primary legislation governing Looked After Children and fostering services.

Care Standards Act 2000 This sets the regulatory and inspectorial regime and establishes National Minimum Standards.

Children Act 2004: This requires local authorities to promote Looked After Children's educational achievement, and introduced the children's commissioner, Local Safeguarding Boards, directors of children's services, lead member for children's services and minimum fostering allowances that Local Authorities provide.

Children and Young Persons Act 2008: This extends the Children Act 1989 regarding Looked After Children's placements, increases visiting requirements, and introduces the role of the independent reviewing officer.

Children and Families Act 2014: This introduced the Education, Health and Care Plans for children.

Children and Social Work Act 2017: This clarified the Corporate Parenting principles and identified long-term fostering as a 'permanence' option.

Data Protection Act 2018: This set out how data should be sought, held and disposed of particularly children's records as well as records relating to prospective, current and previous foster carers. It was slightly amended after Brexit and now referred to as UK-GDPR.

Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011): This replaced the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Family Placements (1991).

¹ Accessed on 05/06/2023 at <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/policies/fostering-legislation-in-england>

Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (July 2013): This rather long-winded title introduced 'delegated authority' of some parental responsibilities to the foster carer, long-term foster placements and fostering to adopt.

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (July 2018); is 'what is says on the tin'.

Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011): This identified clear outcomes and actions expected of a Foster Carers and their Fostering Service.

Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): independent fostering agencies: published 22 February 2017 and last updated on 31 March 2023.

iv. Why do we do it?

We at 5Fostering do not undertake our roles because of legislation, we do it because we truly believe we can provide a service of quality 'that the children themselves would be proud of'. We have added a few quotes from carers and staff.

... "because it is what we do that matters the most – however small" ...

5Fostering are ... "are my supporters and allies" ...

"because, no matter when things get tough, we know we are not alone - we walk the path together."

... "Because we are supported and appreciated. Because, fostering comes with challenges, but it is very rewarding."

Foundations

Offering

Safe

Trusting

Emotional

Reparative care

Individual

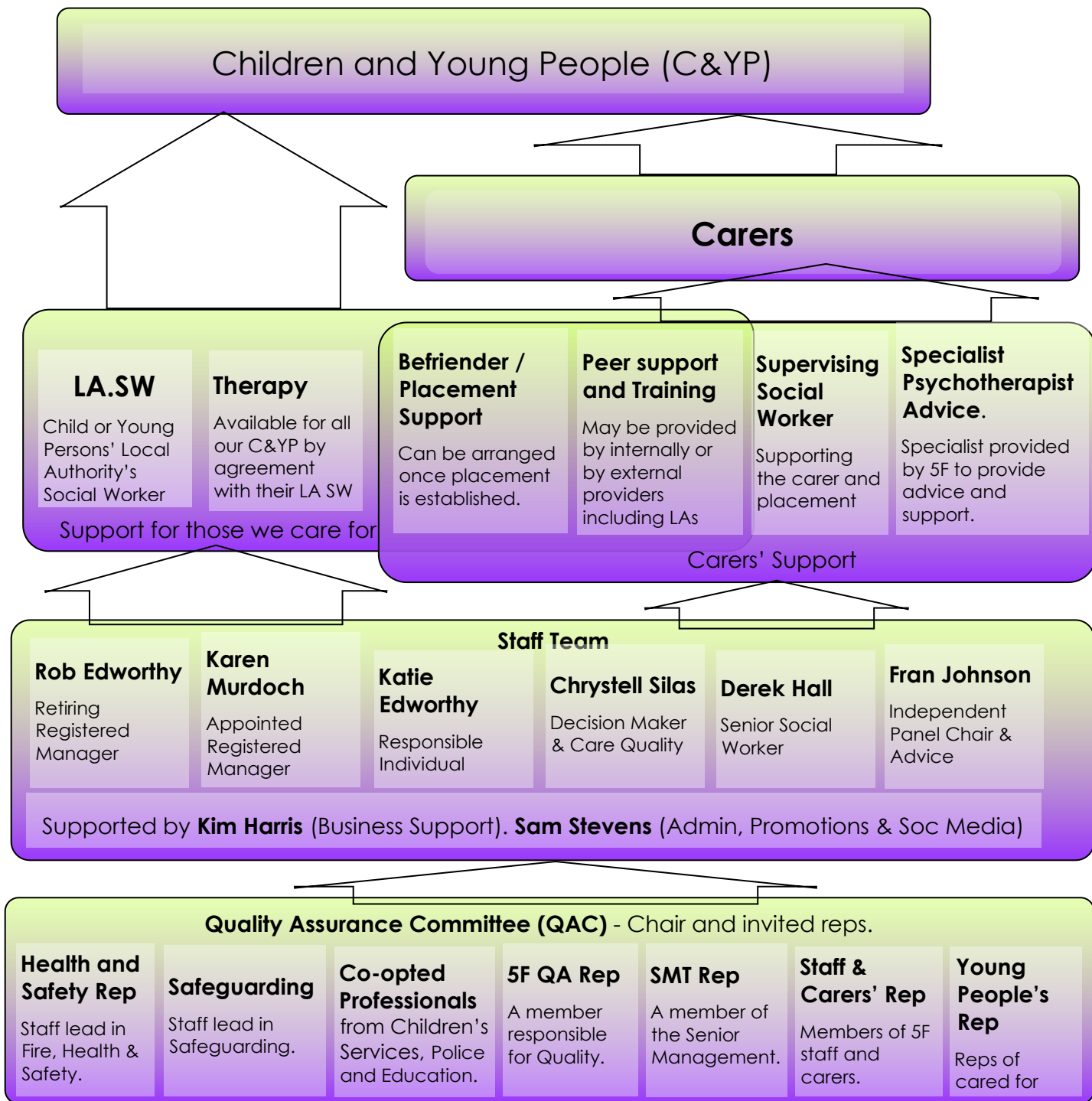
Nurture

Growth"

4. Our Agency

i. Organisational Management Structure

Hierarchy of Five Tiers of Support for those in our care.



ii. Key People

Our team has a combined background in teaching, education, social work, business, management and fostering allowing us to understand all aspects of the agency and contribute effectively to it.

Rob Edworthy – Registered Manager / Director

Experience as a Head teacher, Further Education College Director, leading Ofsted readiness, operational development, 'Every Child Matters' agenda, Child Protection, Nursery & Crèche, and programmes for Basic, Key and Functional Skills, Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.

Foster carer from 1998 to 2016.

Relevant Qualifications; B.Ed(hons), and MA.SW, Level 5 Leadership in Social Care First Aid, CWDC Foster Care .

Job Roles:

- Registered Manager – Liaising with the rest of the team, carers, local authorities and social workers. Overall responsibility for the running of the agency
- Designated Safeguarding Officer – Responsible for Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Information Guardian - responsible for the collection, retention, disclosure, and destruction of information
- Supervising social worker

Karen Murdoch – Registered Manager. Karen has been a qualified social worker since 2001, working in statutory childcare services since that time, including child protection, family support, children's hospital, and adoption teams. She has been working in the fostering sector since 2011, as supervising social worker, senior practitioner, and team manager, initially with the local authority then in IFAs since 2018, including a disability specialist agency.

Job Roles:

- Registered Manager
- Supervising social worker
- Local authority liaison

Katie Edworthy – Responsible Individual / Director

Katie was an Art Teacher in Secondary Education, a lead foster carer from 1998 to 2016, numerous training courses in issues relating to fostering including Attachment Theory, Child Protection, Safer Caring, Resilience, and she was one of the first carers to achieve CWDC (Children's Workforce Development Council) Fostering Qualification.

Relevant Qualifications; B.Ed (Hons), Panel and QAC Member CWDC Foster Carer, Level 2 Counselling, First Aid

Job Roles:

- Training Lead

- Finances.
- Panel administration
- Recruitment and Promotions

Chrystell Silas – Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

With a BSc in Social Work Studies, Chrystell has experience as a child in care, and a parent of three children. She qualified as a Social Worker in 2012 and has worked in Children and Adult Social Care. Qualifications: BSc SW

Job Roles:

- Decision Maker – She makes the final decision in the light of the fostering panel's recommendation.
- Assessment and Approval Quality – Working with the independent panel chairs and the Quality Assurance Committee, her role is to oversee the Assessing Social Workers and their Supervisors' quality of assessments that are presented to the panel, and the quality of the panel and their skills of scrutiny.
- Member of the QAC and SMT

Derek Hall (B.A., DipSW) – is our Senior Social Worker.

He is a widely experienced Social Worker in Children's social care, and he has been known to be a very supportive Supervising Social Worker who has a passion for supporting carers and those they care for.

Job Roles

- Supervising Carers
- Liaising with specialists.
- Coordinating our support with the Local Authority

Amy Clark (BA SW)– Independent Social Worker

- Amy is an Independent Social Worker who undertakes initial assessments. and Annual Reviews as an Independent Reviewing Officer.

Kim Harris – Business Support Manager

Kim has spent thirty years as a primary school teacher in the UK and abroad, in addition to working for a high street bank. She has the special role of leading the 'Voice of the Child' using her skills of working with children and young people.

Qualifications; B.A. Education.

Job Roles:

- Leading the Business Support Team
- Placement Support: gathering feedback from C&YP.
- Bookkeeping – Keeping track of day-to-day expenditure.

- Auditing & CHARMS lead

Sam Sevens –

- Business administrator,
- social media and IT,
- promotions
- social work support.

Sam supports all staff in their roles and processes most of the referrals. She does a fantastic job of 5F promotions, she leads domestic arrangements in the office and organising anniversary and celebration days.

Other independent persons engaged to help our agency are:

Fran Johnson is our independent Panel Chair who represents Children's Social Services and Children Looked After. She has spent many years in the sector, particular as a Senior Social Worker and Practice Manager in the independent fostering sector.

Fran also assists our SMT as a consultant.

John Reid is our independent Chair of our Quality Assurance Committee. This body comprises of representatives of education, children social services, children looked after, current carers and staff. They are the final appeal body, and scrutineers of our quarterly reports.

John is also our independent Data Protection Officer supporting the UK-GDPR.

iii. Services we provide.

5Fostering recruits, assesses, approves, and supports foster families to provide high quality care for looked after C&YP.

5Fostering provide and support a variety of placements:

- Assessment and Recruitment of foster carers
- Long term placements
 - Individual
 - Sibling groups
 - From birth to a 'staying put' / 'staying close' plan
- Short & Medium term (planned)
 - Stayovers ('Respite')
 - 'Short Breaks' or StayOvers' for children outside the agency
- Parent and Child Arrangements (P&C)
 - Addendum assessments for carers to provide parent and child placements.
 - Training for carers to develop their knowledge and skills.

- P&C activity banks and training materials to demonstrate parenting capacity.
- Daily observation template, weekly parenting skills check list, and weekly reflections available on request.

(Please note we do not offer parenting assessments for court proceedings.)

- Short-term (unplanned)
 - Emergency placements
 - 24/72hr placements

We also provide training for Foster Carers on request.

- Training Services cover a wide variety of foster care issues including:
 - Skills to Foster
 - Behaviour management
 - Autism / Asperger's Syndrome/Condition
 - Supporting Education
 - CSE
 - Radicalisation
 - Missing from care
 - County Lines
 - Attachment

Children and young people with disabilities are very welcome. Although carers have considerable experience in working with children and young people who have a disability, we do not have carers with qualifications in supporting disability.

We also do not currently have any wheel-chair accessible homes.

iv. Services we provide or arrange for children and young people.

- **Educational support** – Rob and Katie have a background in education, and we understand how vital this is to young people's life chances. We can assist carers to find the best education available for the child in their care. We liaise closely with the local virtual school and local authorities.
- **Access to the agency Psychotherapist** The agency employs highly qualified and experienced specialist Child Psychotherapist on a regular basis so that Carers are provided with targeted advice and guidance. This is in liaison with any other therapist that may be engaged with any child in place.
- **Therapy** – We can provide therapy and/or the funding for children and young people in our care for up to six months' (26 one-hour sessions) therapy once it has been agreed by their local authority. This can be extended by the placing Authority if they wish to continue it.
- **Organise contact with the birth family and significant people**– we facilitate and can help arrange contact for foster children with relevant people, when necessary, from 'letter box' to supervised arrangements. Although supervising

contact is not part of the carer's agreement, arrangements can be made for the venue, transport and accompanying suitably trained sessional workers.

- **A secure and safe environment** – All foster carers and their homes are checked for gas and electrical safety, fire safety and good practice. C&YP are encouraged to develop protective behaviours but to enjoy challenge and managed risk. We have a comprehensive information handling policy available on request and follow UK-GDPR, Caldecott and 'Golden Rule' principles.

Please note that, in addition to gas and chimney safety checks, all our homes are assessed by qualified electrician for **electrical safety at the agency's expense** when carers are approved. Those in rented accommodation require an assurance from their landlord that the statutory checks have been undertaken.

- **We encourage 'can do' and 'have a go'** – When possible, we encourage and enable C&YP to enjoy social events, pursue hobbies and develop leisure and sporting interests.
- **Placement decided through a careful matching process** – We carefully match our placements aiming for the best outcome through the most effective and compatible relationship between carer and foster child or young person.
- **Promote healthy living** – We require our carers to promote a healthy diet and lifestyle for all the C&YP we look after.
- **Life story work** – We encourage our carers to work with C&YP to retain documents and mementos to keep a reference of their life: to give back some of their past, celebrate their present and give identity for their future. 5Fostering will facilitate this process with specialist support if needed. We would also fully support specialists in Play, Drama, Sport and Art Therapy and Children's Counselling for up to 26 sessions with the agreement of the Child or Young Person's Local Authority Social Worker.
- **Newsletter** – we regularly publish our internal newsletter to recognise and celebrate success in our carers and cared for. Each child or young person, staff member, carer, Panel and QAC member, are all sent a copy.
- **Fun** – last but by no means least we are about having fun – fun because we have achieved, fun because we're well supported, and fun just because we can! This includes activities during school holidays.

v. Services we provide for Carers.

- **24 hour on-call service** – Qualified and experienced advice on call 24/7 supporting carers.
- **Up-to-date, relevant training** – We provide frequent relevant training tailored to carers' needs supporting carers to provide the best outcomes for the C&YP. 5Fostering provides training which addresses emerging national and local agendas and all statutory requirements.
- **Prompt payment** – we provide prompt fortnightly payment direct to carer's bank accounts.
- **Support groups** – we facilitate mutually supportive groups for carers to resolve concerns and share their expertise and good parenting practice. Our carers often give each other mutual support and will meet outside the official support groups.

- **Mentoring for new carers** – We have experienced carers who we encourage to offer support and advice to new carers. New carers are usually ‘buddied up’ with a more experienced carer.
- **Placement through careful matching** – we carefully match our placements to be compatible and successful for the carer and the child or young person. Where possible an appropriate, history, interests, ethnicity, religion and character are all considered when placing children.
- **Recruitment and support through the process** – we are always here to help and give advice for potential carers in the recruitment process. Our carers recognised the experience we have as carers ourselves and value the ‘hands on’ advice that we can give.
- **Stayover breaks** – stayover time is important for the benefit of those we care for, to enhance the care we can provide and to reflect common family life. 5Fostering carers are offered seven nights’ respite for each six-month of continuous care to refresh their relationships, resilience and rigour for the benefit of the children and young people we foster.
- **A Professional Framework** – We have a framework of roles with relevant training and remuneration that develops from a volunteer befriender, through to a highly experienced and effective carer.
- **Family Days** – we will have frequent opportunities during training, community building and celebration events to relax and not take ourselves too seriously - to relieve some of the inevitable stress of our privileged roles.
- Access to an independent **counsellor** to support with carer mental health and promote wellbeing. (PathFinder Counselling in Hastings)

vi. Training and Outreach Services

We provide relevant training tailored to the needs of carers. We can draw upon a broad knowledge of fostering and educational provision, having been foster carers, parents, social workers and teachers ourselves. We understand the need for relevant, up to date training that motivates and inspires carers and equips them for the wide variety of placements and challenges we offer.

We deliver the ‘Skills to Foster’ programme as a starting point for our carers and we are able use everyday examples to put this into context. We feel it is essential for carers to be trained on attachment theory, secure base, promoting resilience, safeguarding, managing challenging behaviour through non-physical intervention, first aid, the principles, policies and procedures of 5Fostering and many more. Carer training is ongoing throughout carers’ careers, and we encourage staff and carers to undertake nonaccredited and accredited courses such as the therapeutic parenting courses, Early Years and Positive Parenting, Diplomas in Social Care through to post graduate support.

We also offer outreach training services which include.

- Independent Social Work
- Training for carers and parents, such as ‘Skills to Foster’, Positive Parenting, Self Esteem, Attachment & Resilience, Behaviour Management etc

5. Approval process to become a 5Fostering carer.

Becoming a foster carer can be a long and stressful process but the benefit of having the opportunity to make a difference in children's lives is well worth it. We make ourselves available to help at any stage of the process and give advice, support and guidance whenever needed.

i. Step 1: Enquiry

There are five ways that members of the public can express an interest and request an application form:

- Website – go to the link and enter a few very basic details.
- Phone 01424 211 122,
- Email office@5fostering.co.uk,
- Post a letter to the 5F office.
- Or in person – at our office in Hooe by appointment, or approach us during one of our public events.

Further details are available via our website at www.5fostering.co.uk. We are often talking to people about 5Fostering in the Bexhill, Hastings, Eastbourne and across the 1066 areas so members of the public are very welcome to discuss fostering or our specialist training programmes with our team there.

If the enquirer wishes, we will arrange a home visit at this time or by phone when it is more convenient.

ii. Step 2: Home visit & Application form

A 5Fostering member will visit the enquirer at home and discuss their queries, concerns, possibilities, the fun of fostering and a 'warts and all' realistic view. They will make some simple observations and give advice on the property and potentials such as possible types of fostering and introduce the agency and our ethos. The 5Fostering representative will not 'sell' the agency as we believe this important life change of the family must be led by the applicant. If the 5Fostering member thinks it appropriate, enquirers may be left an application form, or emailed the application form and then progress this when this has been accepted by the Registered Manager.

iii. Step 3: (Form F Part 1) Records and Identity checks.

Approximate Week 1 to 12 (please note Step **3**, **4** and **6** may be at the same time)

Once the application form is received, an Assessing Social Worker (ASW) will be appointed, UK-GDPR permissions explained and signed, and the application will progress with deadlines set.

Data checks are made, and reports are requested from the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS), Local Authority, credit checks, Social Media checks, current employer and any previous employer of children's services, birth children's school, and the applicants' GP is asked for a reference. All disclosures are requested with the applicants' informed authority, and they should note that they are not automatically excluded if there are criminal incidents or ailments recorded.

We will also be contacting the six referees supplied by applicant families. These will cover an historical perspective of the applicants, their interaction with children and/or young people, their work ethic, social interaction and at least one will be of a professional occupation (e.g. teacher, solicitor, nurse, social worker, architect etc).

Applicant's referees will be contacted for their contribution and the Assessing Social Worker will follow this up with an interview.

iv. Step 4: Induction Training (including 'Skills to Foster')

The course 'Skills to Foster' will be delivered usually over three days during the period of assessment and includes 'My Family Fosters' delivered for the children of the applicants.

We then undertake a 'Skills to Foster Day 4' which includes a refresher of the themes of the main programme, more detail on the placement process and etiquette of the service. We also include during this time all the agreements and documentation that carers are required to acknowledge so that they do this with informed consent.

We are very keen on reflective practice and tailored training for all carers and staff. New carers will complete basic training such as the TSDS that must be completed in the first year, and safeguarding, health and safety, Paediatric First Aid, equality and diversity and any specialist foster training and accredited programmes.

v. Step 5: Midway review Stage 1 Review

Approximate Week 8 to 12

The ASW and their Supervising Social Worker (SSW) will meet to formally review the assessment so far and consider if it is appropriate for the assessment to continue. The outcome of this meeting will be discussed with the applicant and the recommendation will be given to the Agency Registered Manager (RM). This is not to decide if Stage 1 is completed but rather to view progress and the emerging evidence of appropriateness to foster as the collation of Stage 1 evidence may not be completed until near the point of presentation to the Panel.

If Stage 1 is completed and the result of the review is not to proceed the applicants and ADM are notified and the Applicants will be formally informed, and their rights are explained.

vi. Step 6: (Form F part 2) Assessment and interviews/references

Approximate Week 4 to 24

At this stage references will be followed up and referees interviewed by our independent Assessing Social Worker (ASW).

Applicants and members of their household will also have in-depth 1:1 interview that explore relationships and parenting skills. But, again, applicants should rest assured that this is a pragmatic exploration of their parenting, and how ready the applicants' house and household are for fostering.

The assessing Social Worker will make two visits to the household which may be undertaken consecutively. These are to 1, confirm the physical household and the self-assessed Fire, Health and Safety Questionnaire, and 2, interview the members of the household and observe nonverbal communications.

If any member of the household is exhibiting symptoms of any infectious disease, the ASW will delay the visit until this has passed.

vii. Stage 7: Decision of the Panel

Approximate Week 16 to 24 – Presentation of Application to Panel

Once the ASW has collected all information and made their assessment with the support of the Registered Manger (RM), the assessment, supporting documents and a recommendation will be presented to the 5Fostering Panel. This panel is made up of members who have the following expertise.

- a qualified and independent chair of panel
- professionals who have extensive experience in children's services,
- education specialists,
- other specialists and experts in fields relating to children's care,
- C&YP representatives,
- carer representatives
- 5Fostering staff members who have not been involved in the assessment.

They will then consider the submitted evidence, and then meet with the applicant and a supporter (if they would like one). They will then consider the recommendation and either agree with the recommendation or indicate where this is not yet achieved.

Their discussion and recommendation is then recorded in minutes of the Panel Session' which are presented to the 5Fostering 'Agency Decision Maker' (ADM). The ADM makes the final determination and will inform the applicants / foster carers verbally within two working days, and in writing within five working days after having made the decision. The Panel members will also make comment on the quality of the assessment process, the final report and the panel session which is also presented to the ADM for her consideration.

viii. Stage 8: Approval

Weeks approximate 17 to 25 - Approval

Once the ADM's decision is made, the applicant is informed verbally within two working days and then in writing by the fifth day. If successful, the candidate carer will be formally welcomed into the family of our agency and, once their Foster Care Agreement has been signed, they will be a fully approved and registered 5Fostering Carer.

The carers' Assessing Social Worker will introduce them to their new Supervising Social Worker. At this meeting they may be presented with the following, but this will be dependent upon the delivery time of the Skills to Foster Day 4' induction:

- Foster Carers' Certificate of Probation,
- 'Standpoints' - our Foster Care Handbook,
- Foster Care supervision and GDPR Agreement,
- CHARMS Log-in arrangements.

If the ADM decides not to approve the application, they will inform the candidate of their reason for this 'qualifying determination' in writing and the candidate will have the

right to appeal to our Quality Assurance Committee, or the Government's Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) within 28 days.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/independent-review-mechanism>

Independent Review Mechanism, Regent Business Hub, 4, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Wortley, Leeds, LS12 6AJ

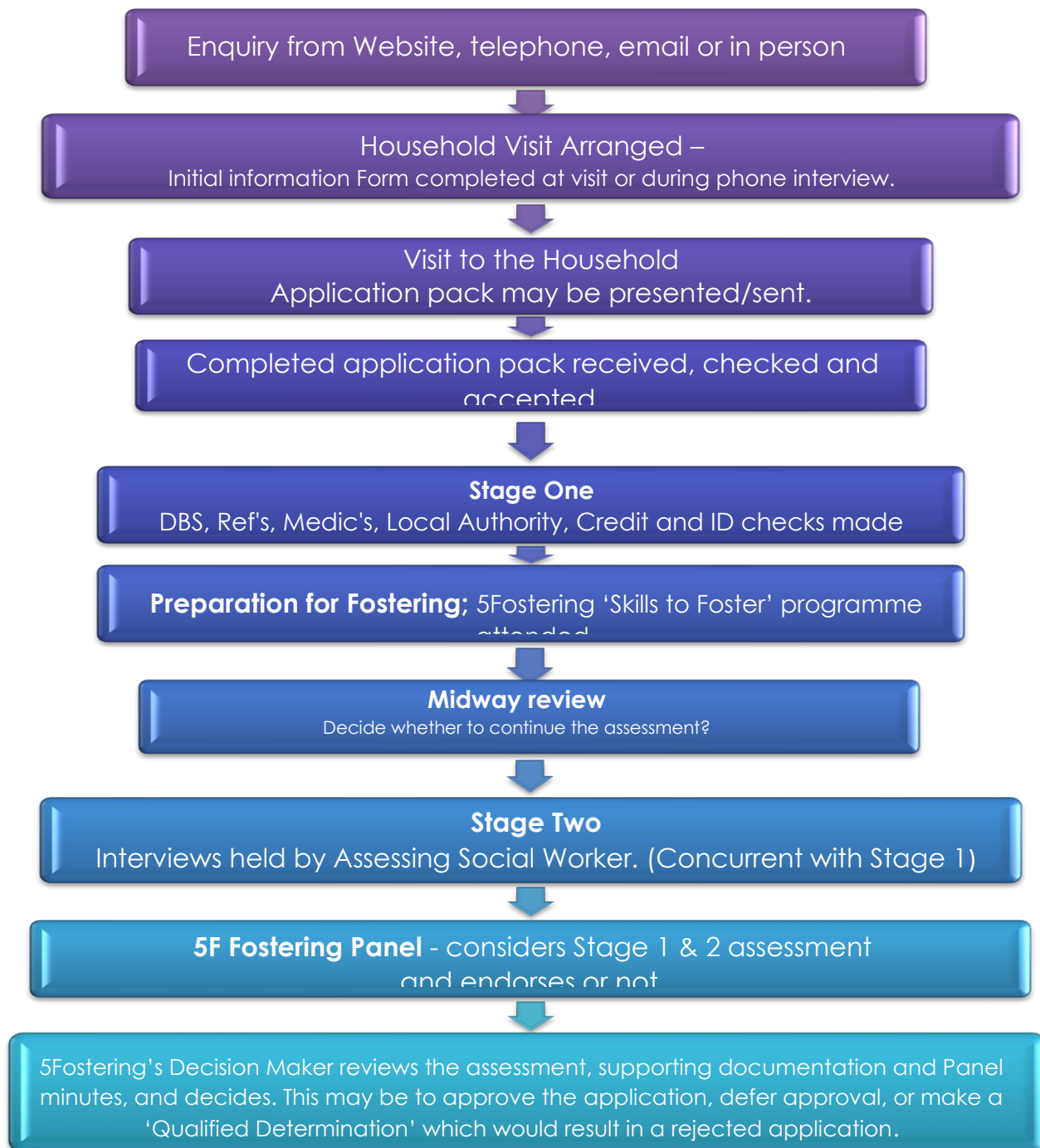
Email; irm@irm.org.uk Telephone 0845 450 3956 (charged at local rate) or 0113 2022080

Phone lines are open between 9.30am and 12.30pm, Monday to Friday.

However, where possible, they prefer contact by email.

ix. Diagram of 5Fostering approval pathway

Figure 1- Flow diagram of Carer Approval



Carers who have received a 'Qualified Determination' will have a letter explaining why this was so and they will be given the opportunity to contest the decision.

If they are approved, carers will complete a fourth day of their Skills to Foster Programme before their first placement, and they will complete the national programme Training and Support Development Standards (TSDS) before the end of their first year, when they will have their first Annual Review. Midway through their first year, a short report is returned to the Panel as an update on the carers and agency, and feedback on their decision.

6. Referral process

The referrals are a key part of the fostering process. It is essential that we match the C&YP to suitable homes in order to utilise the carer skills with the child's needs and enable the C&YP to thrive.

Unplanned Placements

Carers will be prepared for emergency placements and will be put forward where appropriate once a decision based on the in-depth local knowledge of the family and their availability, having discussed the child's needs with the officer placing. The arrival of the child must be managed sensitively as the first sight the child has of the carers may be at their front door.

Planned Placements

Initial enquiry

A placement is requested by a local authority's social services (a 'referral') via a telephone or email. This is recorded on our system along with minimum key information regarding the request (e.g. age, gender, county of origin, type of placement,)

Matching

We consider our carers' availability and their suitability for a match with the child or young adults' needs. We will only suggest a placement that we believe will be successful and be within the expertise and experience of the carers. We may offer the placing authority an anonymised Foster Carer Profile of the prospective carers at this point.

Contacting carers

Having established a potential match, we will contact the carer to inform them of the request and the needs of the Child or Young Person. When the carer feels competent and confident to address the needs of the Child or Young Person then, and only then, will the placement be offered to the placing agency. Local authorities will request carer's 'Form F' if they believe a Child or Young Person could be placed with them.

Initial introductions

The placing authority will be sent the family Welcome Book which in a friendly and homely way presents the family and supporting information with many recent photographs of the home and family members (including pets).

Ideally, carers will go to meet the child prior to placement and introductions will be managed and at an appropriate pace for the Child or Young Person. Once both parties feel comfortable, the placement will begin, and remuneration will follow on a Wednesday fortnight cycle after the first night's stay.

7. Care and Placement plans, and Outcomes Tracking.

Care and Placement plans are an essential and legally required tool to help children and carers plan support and aim for outcomes. Social services will have composed the

Care Plan which will have been decided in court regarding each Child and Young Person.

When children are placed with a family, their Placement Plan will apply the Care Plan to the provision that the carers are expected to offer. This will be devised by the Local Authority and be agreed with 5Fostering – usually at a Placement Agreement Meeting held within a few days of the Child or Young Person first arriving.

In addition, 5Fostering monitors outcomes through our on-line administration system Charms. This note progress the child or young person makes, in relation to the carers provision and the outcomes of the National Minimum standards.

8. Standards of care and National Minimum Standards

We will at least meet and endeavour to exceed the National Minimum Standards set out by the fostering services.

5Fostering will:

- Be guided and scrutinised by the QAC, an overseeing representative body This committee conform and respond to all statutory and regulatory frameworks pertinent to Looked After Children and Fostering including all Regulations and Requirements.
- Meet and strive to exceed all the requirements as directed by Ofsted.
- Endeavour to demonstrate and be recognised for a quality of fostering that is exemplary in practice and to be a sector lead.

9. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the essential focus of everything we do, and the subject of a substantial document entitled 'Safeguarding: Principles, Policy and Procedures'. This and all other Principles Policies and Procedures (PPP's) are available from the 5Fostering Office.

10. Fire safety

Fire safety is included in our Health and Safety Principles, Policy and Procedures. Having personal experience of domestic house fires, we aim to exceed all fire regulations.

During the home verification stage of the application process 5Fostering will check the fire safety of each property by ensuring that smoke and/or heat detectors and fire blankets are installed on each floor of the property particularly in the kitchen areas. We will also make sure that our carers develop an evacuation strategy with the children or young people of how to react in a fire situation and the most appropriate route. Fire prevention officers will be encouraged to attend properties.

3.10. Consultation with people using the agency.

Those who use our services vary from large institutions to children in care. We need all of their voices to be heard. Our policy for children is included in the 'My5' document available on request, and they are invited to interviewing bodies. We also have a

designated member of staff whose role is to seek the opinions of the children in our care.

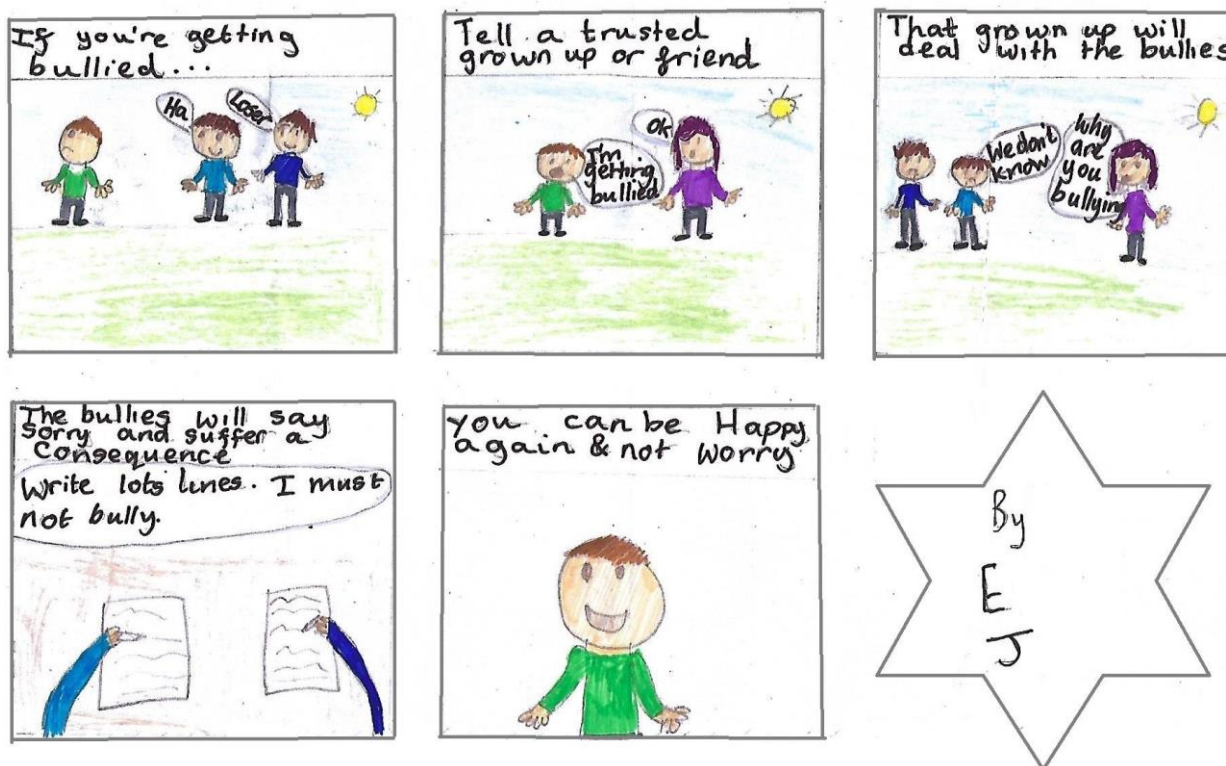
We also have representatives on the ultimate authority body of the agency (the QAC) of stakeholders of the agency; those who have been fostered, the local childrens services, police, health, education and social services who could present a view from the service.

We formally report the monitoring of the agency and inclusion of stakeholders through the quarterly report to our QAC which are then forwarded to Ofsted annually,

11. Inclusion

5Fostering is proud to embrace all aspects of equality and diversity throughout our company regarding recruitment and general ethos.

We believe in providing equality of access, celebrating diversity and feel this is essential for the best outcomes for the children. We do not discriminate on any grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief or marital/civil partnership status and would welcome any observations of our practice whether they are positive or highlight challenges for us.



Drawn by EJ (12yrs)

12. Compliments and Complaints

We welcome compliments and take concerns and complaints very seriously.

We are keen to receive any feedback about how you think we are doing, whether it is positive or negative.

There are many ways you can file a complaint or feedback to us, such as by **telephone** on – 01424 211 122, by **email** to feedback@5fostering.co.uk by speaking to any member of staff **in person**.

You will not get a negative reaction.

Once we initially receive a complaint, we will react accordingly depending on the seriousness of the complaint and then the person or persons involved will be informed of the matter and the situation or occurrence will be investigated. If the complaint is upheld changes will be made so the issue does not occur again, and this will be fed back to the complainant. If it is not found to be as presented, this will also be fed back to the complainant with any actions that were taken.

If the problem persists, then a formal enquiry into the incident will take place which will involve a subcommittee of at least two members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

If the complainant is not satisfied with the result of their complaint, they should contact our QAC in confidence by written letter and the complaint will be handled by the chairman of the QAC.

If the complaint is not satisfied with the response, they can contact.

their own Social Worker,

their Child or Young Persons' **Social Worker**, or

the Children's Commissioner for England 020 7783 8330 or

HELP AT HAND on 0800 528 0731

on the net at www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/

or by post at: Childrens Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings,

20 Great South Street,

London,

SW1P 3BP

As a final resort in the complaints procedure, the complainant could contact **Ofsted** directly on 0300 123 1231 or enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

However, we would have hoped to have sorted the complaint out long before then.

13. Closing comments

5Fostering is a small family-run independent fostering agency unique in the level of experience and expertise in the senior management team and ethos of reflective learning. The team is passionate in providing the most effective support and encouragement so that young people and children may develop the attachment, experience and resilience as with the Secure Base Model and the positive relationships needed to be successful and fulfilled adults.

positive partnerships ~ fostering resilience

through blended, tailored, training and support from the 5Fostering family.