



South Tyneside Council

South Tyneside Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose



Fostering ...



Transforms Lives

Date of Review: 1st September 2017

Date of next Review: 31st August 2018

Introduction

This document has been produced as required under the Fostering Services and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (Care Standards Act 2000) and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

Regulations and Standards require that Fostering Service providers produce a 'Statement of Purpose' including details of all matters as listed under the contents.

This document is a source of information and will be made available upon request for inspection by:

- a) any person working for the purposes of the Fostering Service.
- b) any foster parent or prospective foster parent of the fostering service.
- c) Any child placed with a foster parent by the fostering service; and
- d) the parent of any such child.

A summary of the Statement of Purpose will be provided within 'The Children's Guide' issued to all young people on admission.

The Statement of Purpose requires approval by the Elected Members of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council and will be reviewed, updated and modified whenever necessary, but at minimum on an annual basis.

Organisational Structure

The Director of Children Adults and Health is:

John Pearce
Town Hall
Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE32 2RL

The Head of Children and Families Social Care is:

Shona Gallagher
Town Hall
Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE32 2RL

Interim Service Manager, Fostering is:

Dana Marrett
16 Barrington Street
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE33 1AN

Fostering Team Manager:

Michelle Phillipson
16, Barrington Street
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 1AN

Lead Member: Children, Young People and Families:

Cllr. Joan Atkinson
Town Hall
Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 2RL

This Statement of Purpose describes the Fostering Service within Children, Adults and Health and makes reference to:

- Its status and constitution
- its management structure
- the services it provides
- its aims and objectives, principles and standards of care
- numbers, relevant qualifications and experience of staff
- numbers of foster carers
- numbers of children placed
- numbers of complaints and their outcomes
- the procedures and processes for recruiting, approving, training, supporting and reviewing carers



The Service Context

The Children, Adults and Health Group provide a wide range of care and support for children in need and their families. The Fostering Service is an integral part of the Group and is managed within Children and Families Social Care. Its primary responsibility is to provide all of the appropriate services to meet the fostering requirements of South Tyneside. Placements are provided through South Tyneside Fostering Service and through negotiation with other regional local authorities, independent and voluntary agencies.

The Fostering Service provides and supports the following types of placements.

- Pre adoption placements
- Fostering for Adoption placements
- Emergency placements
- Mother and Baby placements
- Short term placements
- Long term placements
- Respite placements
- Connected Persons placements

Ethos:

The ethos of Fostering Service is to offer a continuous and individual service based upon quality care, education/learning and development and health, for every child and young person placed.

The Local Authority has a commitment to the safeguarding, welfare, growth and development of all looked after children. Through policy, procedures, training and the behaviour of all staff and Carers within the Fostering Service, these values and beliefs are promoted. We aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of our children and young people.

By providing a positive care experience, we aspire to help children and young people come to terms with issues from their past and move forward to increase their level of resilience and achieve optimal outcomes, enhance their life skills and therefore their life chances.

Aims of South Tyneside Fostering Service:

Recruit & train foster carers who can offer high quality foster placements for children and young people who have been assessed as in need of a family placement.

Value diversity by recruiting and training carers who respect, promote and reflect the individual needs and cultures of the children & young people placed with them.

Ensure that services provided promote equal opportunities and individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or culture.

Ensure that children & young people are placed with carers who have the skills and experience to meet their needs.

Offer the opportunity for children and young people to participate in a range of activities that will ensure that their needs wishes and experiences are listened to and utilised to inform service development.

Ensure that children in foster placements are fully informed about what they can do if they are unhappy about their placement or wish to make a complaint

Work together with agencies to ensure children and young people receive all of the support they require to maximise their opportunities and potential.

Enable carers to have a clear pathway of training opportunities.

Offer 24 hour support to all Foster carers.

The Foster Carers' Charter:

South Tyneside Fostering Service is committed to the Foster Carer charter which sets out below:

The Role of the Fostering Service

South Tyneside Fostering Service aims to offer a high quality of placements to children and young people who are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. The Service values diversity and the recruitment, training and ongoing support ensures that registered carers respect, promote and reflect the individual needs and cultures of the children and young people placed with them.

The working relationship between the Fostering Service and Foster Carers is based on mutual trust and respect and help in enabling you to provide a safe, caring and nurturing environment for the looked after children of South Tyneside.

South Tyneside Fostering Service is expected to:

Ensure that they work to relevant regulations, policy and practice guidelines

Ensure that children and young people are placed with carers who have the experience, skills and expertise to meet their needs.

Ensure that carers are aware of the everyday decisions they can make regarding the child they care for to enable them to feel part of the family and not be treated differently from their peers.

Ensure Carers have good support, including regular supervision, regular allowances, 24 hour access to the Service and a clear pathway of training opportunities.

Ensure that any allegations are dealt with timely, that Carers are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with independent support in the event of an allegation being made.

Ensure Carers are made fully aware of the complaints procedure.

Offer the opportunity for children and young people to participate in a range of activities that will ensure that their needs, wishes and experiences are listened to and utilised to inform service development.

Ensure that children in foster placements are fully informed about what they can do if they are unhappy about their placement or wish to make a complaint.

Work together with other agencies to ensure children and young people receive all of the support they require to maximise their opportunities and potential.

Foster carers are expected to:

Be positive role models; treat their foster child as a part of their family and promote/advocate for all aspects of the child's development, including education, physical and emotional health and well-being.

Support the child they care for by participating in training and development and using the skills and understanding developed to make a positive impact.

Work in partnership with any key professionals involved with the child's life to support their physical, emotional health and wellbeing, development and learning.

Social workers, key professionals and the Fostering Service are expected to:

Provide foster carers with full written information about the child.

Acknowledge the importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer, and treat foster carers respectfully, fairly and as a core member of the care team around the child.

Listen to and involve foster carers in decision making and drawing up and reviewing of the care plan/placement plan.

South Tyneside Council's pledge to all of their looked after children:

“All of the people who work in South Tyneside Council want you to be safe, happy and achieve the most that is possible. We promise that we will always try to make decisions with you rather than for you and we will also make sure that we listen to you and understand your point of view”

In order to achieve this we will:

- Find ways to help you feel happy, safe and comfortable in the place that you live by supporting you to achieve a sense of belonging and showing you how important you are to us.
- Make sure you feel that you are valued as a person and that adults listen to your ideas and suggestions.
- Make sure that you have an adult who you trust and can support you while you are in care.
- Offer you a good education in our best schools, which taps into your talents and skills and supports you to achieve the most that you can.
- Develop the Children in Care Council in a way that will ensure that it represents your views and helps you in any way it can.
- Help to give you good memories for the future by giving you the opportunity to enjoy the things you like to do, while supporting you to hold on to and record these memories in a meaningful way. We will also make sure that you have the chance to tell us when you feel we need to know more.
- Offer you the support that has been agreed to help you get ready practically and emotionally for being an adult.
- Speak up for you as a group and as individual young people and also make sure that you have access to the best services that are available for children and young people in the country.

Placements:

Emergency Placements:

At times, there is a need for children to be placed immediately e.g. Police Powers of Protection, Emergency Protection Orders. In these situations, the Placements Service will receive as much information as possible from the allocated social worker and all attempts will be made to find an appropriately matched placement.

Mainstream placements:

Referrals are received for all children requiring a foster placement. Each referral sets out the needs of the child/young person and highlights any risks etc. that need to be taken into consideration when considering an appropriate match.

Weekly allocation meetings are held within the Fostering Service to consider all requests for placements. Information provided in the referral form is used to consider an appropriate match taking into account the needs of the child, the type of placement required, any safeguarding considerations and the skills of the Foster Carer. Allocated Fostering Officers will discuss any potential placements with Foster Carers prior to arranging any visits and planning admission.

Fostering for Adoption Placements:

The Fostering Service works closely with South Tyneside Adoption Service to support Fostering for Adoption Placements.

Where the local authority's care and permanency planning has decided that adoption is the best plan for the child and this is opposed by parents the local authority is limited as to what it can do to identify or make a placement until a court agrees a Placement Order. This usually requires a period of temporary care for the child.

Fostering for Adoption is a circumstance whereby a child can be placed with people who are dually approved as adopters and foster carers during the period of temporary care until the court makes its final decision. If the court agrees adoption will best meet the needs of the child then the foster to adopt carers can adopt the child in their care.

Where adoption is the final plan fostering to adopt protects the child and enables them to experience good quality, uninterrupted consistent care as soon as possible while ongoing assessment of family is undertaken.

Respite placements

The Fostering Service has a number of Foster Carers who offer short break/respice placements to children. Referrals for these placements are sent to the Placements Service and matching with appropriate carers is considered at the weekly allocations meeting.

Connected People (Family & Friend) placements

Connected People are family and friends of children and young people who are temporarily approved as carers under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Regulations. These carers receive a full assessment from a qualified social worker, which is presented to the Fostering

Panel. Connected Carers receive the same support and access to training as is afforded to all Carers registered with South Tyneside.

Young Futures Scheme:

‘Make it happen for them, make it happen for you’

Some children and young people’s childhood experiences leave them particularly vulnerable. Whilst all of our carers possess a number of key qualities and skills, those engaged with children & young people through our specialist fee based scheme, ‘Young Futures’ are in possession of particular levels of resilience, patience and understanding.

The ‘Young Futures’ scheme can be defined within in 3 specific areas:

Teenagers:

Carers offer placements to children/young people aged 12 – 18years

Permanency:

Carers offer permanent placements to children who are aged between 8 – 12 years when they initially are placed.

Task Centred:

Carers offer children a time-limited placement to assist in enabling them to return home/move on to a permanent placement. The age range provided by carers will be determined in the carer’s conditions of registration.

What type of people become young futures carers?

It is anticipated that generally, newly recruited foster cares will initially foster as mainstream carers – unless they have experience working with children/young people. This may be for example:

- Employment within child-care
- Youth work experience
- Previous experience of fostering for another Agency
- Have demonstrated through experience and assessment as having the appropriate competencies.
- Have the Diploma in Care (formerly NVQ3) or an equivalent along with relevant experience)

An application form is in place for those mainstream Foster Carers who wish to be considered as Young Futures Carers.

Foster Carers

As of 31.07.17, South Tyneside Fostering Service has 113 registered fostering families looking after 118 children and young people. Of these carers:

- 61 are mainstream carers,
- 38 are young futures carers,
- 7 are Connected/kinship carers
- 7 are respite carers

In addition to this there 7 caring families temporarily approved under Regulation 24 caring for 10 children.

Placement agreement meetings are held either prior to placement or immediately following a placement being made. The placement agreement outlines the needs of the child, the services the carer and other professionals will provide and the support that will be available from both the Fostering Officer and the child's Social Worker. All placement agreements are signed by all parties involved and are recognised as a contract between the Foster Carer and South Tyneside.

Recruitment of Foster Carers

Increasing placement choice is a primary objective for the service and Foster Carer recruitment continues to be a priority for the South Tyneside Fostering Service. To this end a recruitment campaign continues.

The campaign is designed and implemented by the local authority Marketing Communications Team who work closely with the Fostering Service. To support recruitment, South Tyneside is a member of the regional marketing forum alongside neighbouring local authorities who undertake joint recruitment drives.

As part of their role, a Fostering Officer within the Fostering Service has the responsibility for recruitment. This includes facilitating monthly open evenings, visiting prospective carers and facilitating pre-approval training. Consideration is currently being given to the employment of a Recruitment Officer shared with South Tyneside Adoption Service as part of the ongoing development of the service.

Applications to foster are encouraged and welcomed from all members of the community and the assessment process clearly considers an individual's circumstance, skills, needs and abilities.

All applicants to South Tyneside Fostering service undertake pre-approval training, which consists of 3 full days, includes the provision of a resource book and undertaking homework. An experienced Foster Carer supports the delivery of the training alongside two staff from the Fostering Service. Feedback is provided to all applicants on completion of the training when the decision is made as to whether an applicant will go on to undertake a full assessment of the applicants circumstances, skills and suitability to foster.

Fostering Panel

The Fostering Panel meets 12 times each year and is chaired by an independent social work qualified professional. Panel members include representation from Social Care, Health, an elected member, youth worker from the local community and a former looked after young person. Legal, Medical and Panel advisors are also available to offer guidance to panel members as required. Training for Panel members is provided on a 6 monthly basis and appraisals for all panel members held annually. Panel members are constituted from a Central List of professionals from various relevant disciplines who have received appropriate training and guidance in relation to panel business.

The purpose of the panel is:

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- To monitor the provision and standard of foster care for children through making good quality decisions about the approval of foster carers and the terms of such an approval.
 - To assess the continued ability of foster families to meet the needs of children.
 - Consider the first annual review of all Foster Carers and any other review the service considers necessary
 - Recommend the suitability of long term matches for children
 - Give advice and make recommendations on other matters or cases as the Fostering Service may refer.

Prospective carers receive information about panel function, membership and process in preparation training and during assessment. Prospective carers and foster carers whose existing registration is being considered by panel are invited to attend panel and are supported in the process by the assessing social worker.

Foster Carer Liaison Group

The Foster Care Liaison Group aim to seek and represent the views of Foster Carers.

In addition, group members:

- Support recruitment, facilitate training alongside Fostering Officers.
- Organise activities and social events for foster carers and children.
- Support the delivering of training.

The group is provided with a use of a room at Barrington Street and meet with the Fostering Manager/Fostering Officer on a regular basis to discuss service development and topical issues.

The group also participates in the organisation of activities and social events for foster carers and children as well as facilitate consultation with carers.

Foster Carer Support and Training

All Carers have an allocated Fostering Officer who visits regularly and ensures they are supported in their role as a Foster Carer. All carers receive regular supervision and an annual PDP. In addition to this, there is a varied programme of training available to all carers, which enables them to continually develop their knowledge and skills.

This includes:

Training and Development Standards for Foster Carers.

All new foster carers are expected to complete these standards within 12 months of their approval (18 months for Connected Carers). The standards are designed to support foster carers from pre approval through their first 2 years of fostering. They are intended to ensure that carers have the best possible training, information and support.

Personal Development Plans (P.D.P.'s)

All Foster carers have a Personal Development Plan, which they undertake with their Fostering Officer. Personal Development Plans are reviewed annually and are used to ensure personal objectives; training and development are focused on service and corporate aims.

Induction Training

This training is delivered twice each year; once during the day and the second as twilight sessions. Sessions are facilitated by a number of partner professionals and cover all of the areas Foster Carers need to have an awareness and understanding of. It is expected that all Carers will undertake this training initially within their first year of becoming registered, then when necessary as a refresher, or when identified within a PDP. This training covers:

- Record keeping
- Confidentiality
- Policies and Procedures
- Foster Carer's reviews
- Partnership working
- Supervision and Personal Development Plans
- Looked After Children's Education including Personal Education Plans
- Child Protection
- Bullying
- Substance Misuse
- Sexual Health
- Fire Safety
- Communicable diseases
- The mental and physical wellbeing of Looked After Children
- Looked After Children's Health, Health Assessments & SDQ's
- Health and Safety
- E Safety
- Medication
- Child development
- Positive management of behavior (Team Teach)
- Sexual Exploitation
- First Aid and Childhood illnesses
- Social model of disability
- Moving on to adulthood
- Equality & Diversity
- Allegations
- Supervised Contact
- Impact of domestic violence
- Developing resilience

CUBS Training (carers understanding behaviour strategies)

This training has been developed in collaboration with a neighbouring local authority utilising the skills of workers trained as part of the KEEP standard programme. The CUBS training programme aims to support carers in developing positive management strategies for the children they care for with the aim of improving the emotional outcomes for children and increasing placement stability.

Certificate in Care (level 2)

South Tyneside Fostering Service has been successful in securing funding for Foster Carers to undertake level 2 training; 6 Foster Carers completed the training in 2016.

Diploma in Health and Social Care (level 3)

South Tyneside Fostering Service is currently supporting 5 Foster Carers to undertake level 3 training; these carers are self-funding the training through the student loan scheme.

Support to Foster Carers

On approval each Foster Carer is allocated a specific named support officer from the Fostering Team. This officer is responsible for all ongoing support, supervision and training needs.

If a Fostering Officer is not available, there is a duty system in place during normal office hours.

The frequency of the contact with Fostering Officers is negotiable and will vary depending on the types of placements. Alongside general support, regular formal supervision sessions are undertaken.

Foster Carers are provided with the mobile telephone number of their allocated Fostering Officer in order to access 24-hour support from the Fostering Service. Foster Carers have also the support of the Out of Hours social work service which is used when allocated fostering officers are not available.

Supervision

The frequency of supervision will depend on the type of placements:

- Supervision will be monthly for short term and more complex and challenging placements.
- Supervision will be bi-monthly for long term well established placements.

Independent Advice and Consultancy is also offered through FosterTalk, Foster Carers Independent Support Service, which is commissioned by the Fostering Service.

Additional Support Services available to children/young people & Foster Carers

Children and Young People's Service (CAMHS)

This service to support the emotional health and well-being of Looked After children has recently been reconfigured and implemented. Individual support to children as well as support, advice and training to Foster Carers continues to be available following referral.

Matrix Service

The Matrix Service offers individual support to children/young people and their Carers on any issues around substance misuse; including smoking, drugs and alcohol. The Matrix Service is involved in delivering training as part of the Foster Carers training programme.

Healthy Relationships

Jane Slessor, the Relationship Works Project Co-ordinator offers individual support to young people and their Carers on any areas around healthy relationships; this includes supporting their attendance at the sexual health clinic if appropriate. Jane is involved in the delivering of training to Foster Carers.

LAC Nurse

Janet Hutchison, LAC Nurse is available to support children and carers around general health issues. The Nurse scrutinises completed health assessments to ensure they are appropriate and complete and offers exit interviews with carer leavers regarding their health. She is involved in the delivering of training to Foster Carers.

Education

South Tyneside's Project for Looked after Children's Education (The Place), offers individual support, homework clubs, revision classes and a summer school to children in Foster Care. Staff from the Place are involved in delivering training to Foster Carers.

All Looked after Children of statutory school age have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The child's school is responsible for arranging and facilitating the PEP and Foster Carers are expected to attend PEP meetings and support targets set. The Place audits all PEPs and is able to identify any specific needs which are required to assist a child in their social and educational development.

Foster Carer Reviews

Foster Carer's have an annual review, which is arranged by the Children's Standards Unit and chaired Designated Independent Reviewing Officer, Hilary Bagley. Feedback for reviews is sought from carers, placed children, placing social workers, other family members and fostering officers.

Prior to a Foster Carer's Annual Review, Foster Carers have their Personal Development Plan reviewed by a Fostering Officer, which will consider achievements and identify needs.

Each review will confirm approval category and consider any changes to an original approval category. All decisions made in reviews are confirmed by the agency decision maker (Service Lead, Childrens Social Care) following their presentation at Fostering Panel if appropriate.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints:

South Tyneside has an established procedure and information (including child friendly leaflets) in relation to and representation from service users. All children are made aware of the procedure on admission and how to complain is set out in the Children's Guides. Foster Carers are made aware of this procedure from the onset of them expressing an interest and complaints leaflets are provided. In addition to this, Foster carers are made aware of their right to have their case to be re-presented to a Fostering Panel and the Independent Review Mechanism, should they not be satisfied with the recommendation of the Fostering Panel or Agency Decision Maker.

The Fostering Service maintains a record of all complaints received and these can be reviewed in the Fostering Service Complaints File.

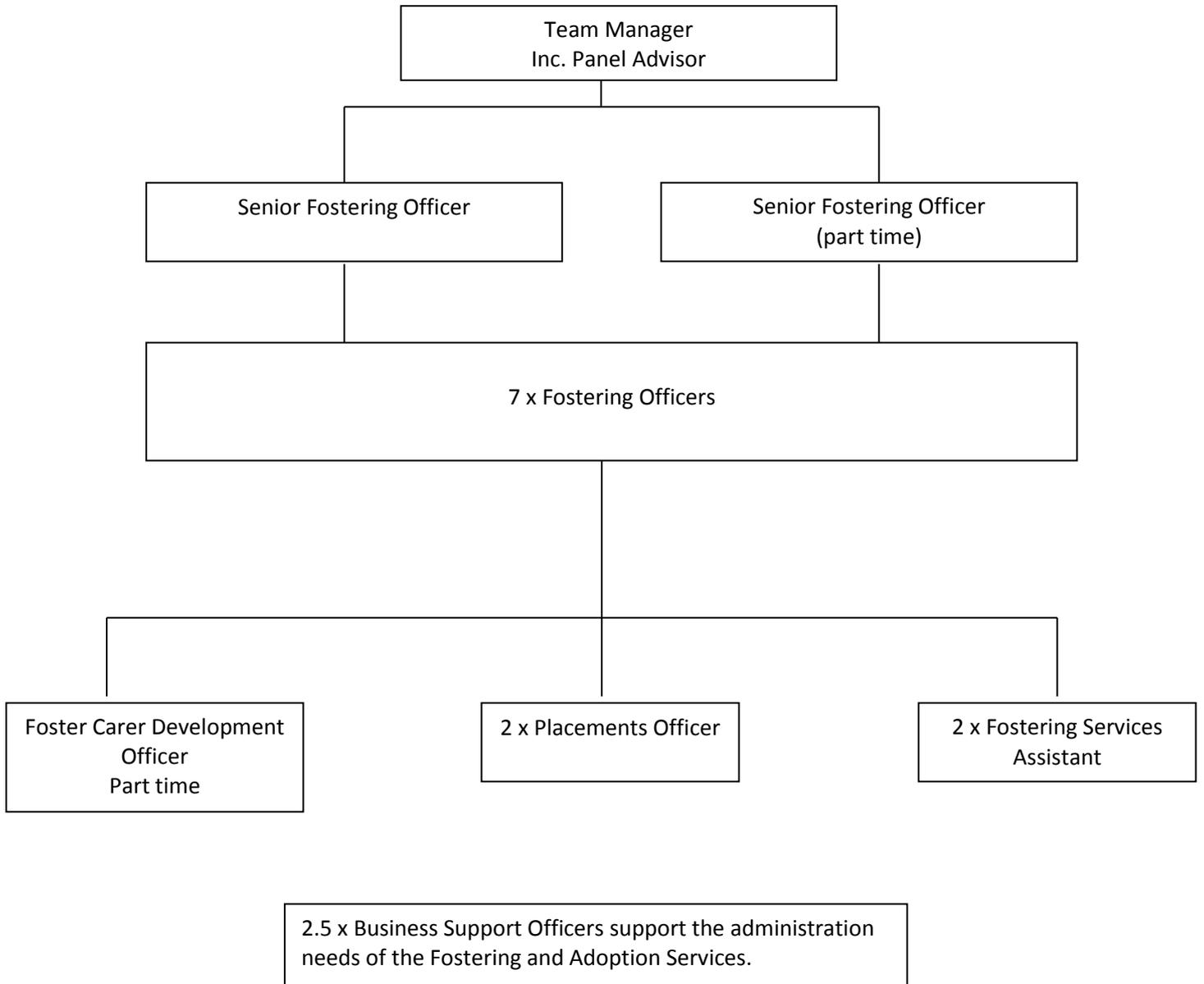
OFSTED

OFSTED inspect the Fostering Service against the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (Care Standards Act 2000) and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the South Tyneside Fostering Service may contact the Children, Adults and Families Group itself or can contact OFSTED at:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street

Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
E mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Structure of the Fostering Service



Fostering Service: Staffing

Michelle Phillipson Interim Fostering Team Manager	Qualifications: DipSW, Consolidation Experience: Child Protection, Care Planning Residential Care and Fostering
Kath Whitfield Senior Fostering Officer (part time)	NNEB. SRN. CSS. P.Q AWARD. MA Experience: Nursery Officer Family Centre, Social Work, Child Protection, Children with Disabilities, Quality Monitoring, Social Work Management & Fostering
Kelly Vasvary Senior Fostering Officer (Currently maternity leave)	BA (Hons) Psychology & French. P/G Cert. in Social Work. P/G Cert. in Child Protection C.M.I. level 5, Management & Leadership Experience: Foster Carer, Social Work Fostering Panel Member, Fostering
Jill Andersen Fostering Officer	BA (Hons) Sociology & Social Admin CQSW Experience: Social Work, Fostering
Joan Archer Fostering Officer	CSS Experience: Residential Care, Social Work, Fostering,
Amelya Lyndle Fostering Officer	CQSW Consolidation module 2 Experience: Residential Care, Social Work, Fostering
Carol Reed Fostering Officer	CSS PT Award PQ1, PQCCA (PG Dip) BA (Hons) Social Science Experience: Social Work, Barnardo's Project Worker, Barnardo's Deputy Project Manager, Fostering.
Clair Tate Fostering Officer	BA (hons) Degree in Social Work Consolidation of Social Work (post grad) Experience: Drug and Alcohol; Social Work: Fostering
Kevin Mulgrew	MA social work;

Fostering Officer	BA hons public servant management Experience: Families in care; Youth Offending, children with disabilities; adults. Social Work, Fostering
Angela Effard	NVQ 3&4 in Advice & Guidance; Fostering Service Assistant NVQ3 Children & Young People PA diploma in Advanced Guidance Experience: careers education; Connexions, Fostering
Suzie Devlin Fostering Service Assistant	Foundation degree in Youth & Community City & Guilds 7407 Teaching Certificate Experience – work with families, substance use, youth crime & youth & community work. Level 3 Diploma in Health & Social Care
June Smith Placements Officer	RILS – Dipolma in legal typing NVQ3 Business Administration NVQ4 Business Administration
Ann Powell	NVQ3 Business Administration NVQ3 Payroll Teaching Assistant level 1
Teresa Kingdon Worked Based Assessor	BSc Hons Health & Social Care TDLB Assessor, 7306 Teaching Cert, Post Grad in Training & Education

Temporary staff:

The Fostering Service has employed 2 x part time temporary Fostering Officers to support the needs of the service due to 'acting up' arrangements; both are qualified social workers and their main workload is in relation to the assessment and support of Connected Carers.

Business support provided to Fostering & Adoption Services: 2.5 full time equivalents.

All members of staff within the Fostering Service are qualified to undertake the role for which they are employed and have between 7 and 40 years' experience of working with children and young people. All staff receive regular training (in-service and external) to continually develop their skills, knowledge and professional competence. Training and development needs are identified within a staff member's annual Personal Development Review (a part of which is forwarded to the training section) and monitored within formal supervision sessions.

To support the undertaking of fostering assessments, the Fostering Service has developed a sessional pool of qualified social workers. Sessional workers are supervised by the Panel

advisor when undertaking an assessment to ensure appropriate support and guidance is provided.

Business Plan

The Fostering Service operates a Team Plan, which is reviewed regularly and updated annually. The purpose of this is to continue to improve services to Foster Carers and Looked after Children, as well as responding to legislation, government initiatives and seeking to achieve best practice.