



Statement of Purpose

Celebrating Achievements



January 2022

PARK FOSTER CARE

"Celebrate what you want to see more off"

Park Foster Care's Vision

"At Park Foster Care our vision is for children to be cared for by committed foster families, where happy and fun memories are made. To achieve this we will recruit, assess and support people who are safe and able to understand the importance of a child's history, their uniqueness and their potential. At Park Foster Care we value our foster carers as part of the professional team and together will make a difference."

Introduction

Park Foster Care was registered as a fostering agency in 2004, established by social workers with family placement and child care experience. On 12th August 2010, the agency became a wholly owned subsidiary of CareTech Community Services Ltd and now operates from offices located in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

This Statement of Purpose takes into account the expectations of the National Minimum Standards and Statutory Guidance 2011. As required the Statement of Purpose sets out Park Foster Care's Aims and Objectives, the services and facilities it provides and how the service monitors the outcomes for children placed in our care. A copy of the Statement of Purpose can be provided on request and can be found on Park Foster Care's website (www.parkfostercare.com).

In line with the expectations of the National Minimum Standards 16.1 this Statement of Purpose is made available to the following people:

- Foster carers approved by Park Foster Care and prospective foster carers
- Staff members at Park Foster Care
- Any social worker of a child living with a Park Foster Carer
- A parent or person with parental responsibility of any child living with a Park Foster Carer

This Statement of Purpose is intended to be reader friendly and child-focused as outlined in National Minimum Standard 16.2. It sets out to define the principles underpinning the service Park Foster Care provides, and does not include the details of processes and procedures, all of which are available on request. A shortened version of this Statement of Purpose is incorporated into Park Foster Care's Children's Guide.



The Aims of Park Foster Care – a child focussed service

Park Foster Care is committed to providing caring, nurturing homes for children unable to live with their birth families. We are committed to supporting children to achieve their potential and develop resilience, by overcoming the loss and trauma which they may have previously experienced.



The Objectives of Park Foster Care

Park Foster Care takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously, ensuring rigorous recruitment of staff and foster carers, and involves statutory agencies appropriately when issues of concern come to light with staff or foster carers. At Park Foster Care we adopt a collaborative approach to care planning with the responsible authority, supporting the development of an up-to-date and child-focussed care plan for each child, ensuring a clear pathway to permanence is achieved as quickly as possible.

Park Foster Care aims to provide:

- A service where children come first in our thinking, planning and delivery and one which listens to and allows children to contribute to its development;

- Foster homes which are carefully matched with the needs of the child and where children feel like they belong to a family;
- Foster carers who are fully prepared, supported, supervised, trained and who actively engage with Park's Parenting Approach;
- Foster homes which provide stability and security to children and promote a child's positive sense of their own identity - including their culture, religion and ethnicity – respecting the child's origins in every aspect of the care provided;
- Foster homes which promote contact when appropriate for the foster child and where children are supported to make sense of their past;
- Foster homes which actively promote the child's education and learning, including celebrating and developing their talents and hobbies;
- Foster homes which actively promote the child's health, including mental health;
- Foster homes which actively prepare the young person for adulthood, at a pace and style that the young person can absorb and where foster carers help children understand and manage risks for themselves;
- Foster homes which children leave, whenever possible, in a planned way or, when this is not possible, which help foster children to understand why they had to leave unexpectedly;
- Social worker supervision of foster carers that, although supportive and mindful of the challenging role played by foster carers, takes a robust approach to poor practice, challenging foster carers to provide the high quality care that children deserve.



How Park's Parenting Approach is integrated into our Service

Park Foster Care actively promotes 'Park's Parenting Approach' (PPA) model of fostering developed by Philippa Kelly (Park's Consultant Therapist and previous Therapeutic Lead). As well as being well evidenced in terms of social care and psychological research, the model is quickly explained and its relevance to day to day fostering easily grasped by social workers and foster carers alike. The approach promotes the understanding of developmental trauma and how to care for children who have had adverse life experiences - building a base of safety and security for the child, both physically and emotionally, in order that they can develop and reach their full potential - along with addressing their early life experience of abuse or neglect. It supports foster carers and staff to be reflective about their own actions, thoughts and feelings in order that they can support children and young people to accept the nurture and care they are afforded within the fostering home.

Philippa now works for Park on a consultancy basis. She is a Theraplay practitioner, working with children and foster carers directly and supporting foster carer to use the principles of Theraplay with the therapeutic parenting they offer to the children cared for by Park Foster Care. She also provides two therapeutic training courses for carers twice per year. Carers are supported to consolidate their learning through support groups run by our Therapeutic Social Worker, Sarah Greer-Cooper.

PPA is an integrated approach, where training provides the basis for learning and development but it is fully supported by support groups, reflective practice, supervision and peer support.

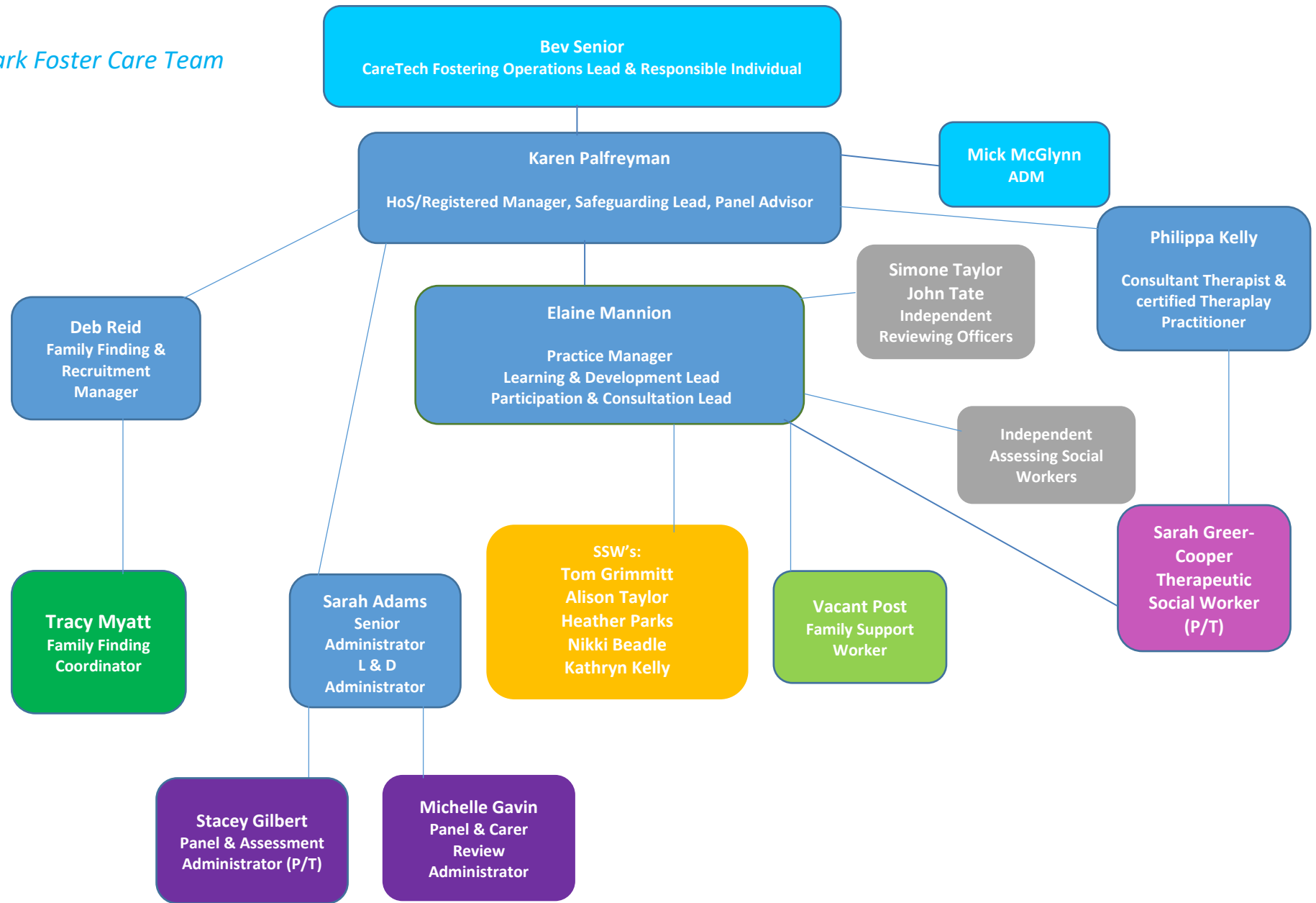
At Park Foster Care we recognise that therapeutic parenting, which is responsive to the experiences and needs of the child, provides the basis from which education, social, physical, emotional and relationships can develop.

Park Foster Care is committed to embedding Park's Parenting Approach into all that we do in the following ways:

- Introducing Park's Parenting Approach in all our recruitment literature and on the website, so that anyone interested in fostering knows about the model right from the start

- Delivering our preparation group training with a specific emphasis upon the importance of Park's Parenting Approach to all prospective foster carers
- Ensuring that the final analysis sections of all our assessments of prospective foster carers address the dimensions of the model
- Making sure that our Foster Carer Handbook, made available to all our approved foster carers, makes reference to Park's Parenting Approach model
- Making sure that the Foster Carer Review format considers the quality of care provided by each of our foster carers through the lens of Park's Parenting Approach dimensions

The Park Foster Care Team



Meet the Park Foster Care Team

- **CareTech ADM:** Mick McGlynn has with a wealth of experience as an ADM, safeguarding manager, child protection team manager and undertaking LA Peer Reviews.
- **CareTech Operations Lead- Fostering/Responsible Individual:** Bev Senior has 30 years of disability and fostering experience in the private and public sector. She has been a Registered Manager, and was a Regional Manager across the Midlands and Wales, and Agency Decision Maker with a national IFA before taking up her post at Park. Bev leads the Senior Management Team within Fostering for CareTech.
- **Park Foster Care Head of Service/Registered Manager:** Karen Palfreyman qualified as a social worker in 2001 and has worked in both child protection and fostering services in the local authority and, for the past 15 years, in Independent Fostering Agencies, 10 of those being at Park. She is the **Safeguarding Lead** and **Learning & Development Lead** at Park Foster Care, **Panel Advisor**, and supervises the **Practice Manager**, Elaine Mannion, the **Family Finding & Recruitment Manager**, Deb Reid and Sarah Adams, the **Senior Administrator**.
- **Independent Reviewing Officers:** Simone Taylor is a very experienced social worker with management, panel and LADO experience. Simone has worked as an independent social worker for many years and has reviewed Park's foster carers for the past 8 years. We have also recently appointed John Tate as a second Independent Reviewing Officer. John has a background across the breadth of children's services including fostering services and has worked independently for the past 11 years undertaking foster carer reviews for another agency and dealing with complaints for local authorities.
- **Consultant Therapist:** Philippa Kelly has been a qualified social worker for 20 years, during this time has worked in CAMHS, a hospital (Tier 4) setting for young people with mental health difficulties and has been working in fostering for the last 12 years. Philippa has completed a family therapy degree, and during her Master's wrote and researched Park's Parenting Approach. More recently she has completed level 1 & 2 Dyadic Development Psychotherapy and is a recently certified Theraplay Therapist.

- **Practice Manager:** Elaine Mannion qualified as a social worker in 2003 and has disability and fostering social work experience. She is Park's most longstanding employee having worked in the service for 15 years. She is the *Consultation & Participation Lead* and leads the events committee. She supervises the *SSW's*, *Therapeutic Social Worker* and the *Family Support Worker*. Elaine also supervises the *Independent Social Work Assessors* having responsibility for QA for assessments and Foster Carer Annual Reviews. Elaine also coordinates the Skills to Foster training, runs some of the foster carer training, leads on Supervising Social Worker inductions and practice sessions and also has responsibility for carer inductions.
- **Therapeutic Social Worker:** Sarah Greer-Cooper has worked as a SSW for Park for many years and recently was successful in being appointed to this role. Sarah has excellent skills in therapeutic parenting and has completed many therapeutic training courses both internally and externally to the agency. Sarah has responsibility for leading the foster carer support groups, liaising with schools and other services in relation to children's therapeutic needs and supporting carers with practical therapeutic strategies as they care for children. She also provides some training and works with Elaine on the 'Prepare to Care' groups.
- **Supervising Social Workers:** Park have a stable team of 5 full time experienced supervising social workers who have many years between them of safeguarding, fostering and adoption social work experience.
- **Family Finding & Recruitment Manager:** Deb Reid has a background in customer service, administration and foster care provision. She headed up a National Placement Service for an independent agency prior to joining Park. Deb is supported by a *Family Finding Coordinator* Tracy Myatt who is an experienced family finder and manages incoming referrals, liaises with local authorities SSW's and carers to ensure children are matched to the right carers.
- **Family Support Worker:** This is currently a vacant post. Our support worker role at Park provides specific one to one support to children and foster carers as required, they are involved in coordinating and running the events for children and also visits to every child once they move into their new foster home to provide a memory box and information about the agency in a child friendly format. The support worker would also work with Elaine on consultation and participation.

- **Senior Administrator & L&D Administrator:** Sarah Adams leads on the Learning and Development administration tasks and also manages the admin team which includes supervising the **Panel/Carer Review Administrator** Michelle Gavin and the **Assessment and Panel Administrator** Stacey Gilbert. Sarah ensures that the general admin tasks are managed efficiently. Sarah is also a Fire Marshal and Health and Safety Lead ensuring the safety of the office and building are maintained.
- **Park Foster Care Fostering Panel:** Park Foster Care's Fostering Panel is chaired by Leona MacKenzie. Leona is an experienced panel chair working within this role with other agencies and local authorities. Leona also has experience as a Quality Assurance Manager within a large Fostering Agency. Park has two Vice Chairs who will lead panel in any interim period. Park's Panel members have a wealth of experience between them including a foster carer, an adopter with education experience, two previously cared for young people, social workers with experience in youth justice, residential social work, adoption and CAMHS. Park's Panel Members bring a range of life experiences and interest in the welfare of children and young people in the care system.



Quality Assurance and Outcomes

To monitor the quality of the services outlined above Park Foster Care uses the following elements:

- *Case records:* All foster carer records are signed off and monitored through regular supervision provided by a Park Foster Care Supervising Social Worker. Sample case records are monitored by the Registered Manager and Senior Social Worker with action taken to address any shortfalls.
- *The independent fostering panel:* It is the role of the fostering panel to make recommendations about the approval status of foster carers. In addition, Park Foster Care is committed to ensuring that fostering panel takes a balanced but robust approach to its independent scrutiny role, and that the panel provides independent feedback on the quality of all the reports it considers.
- *The Voice of the Child:* the voice of child is carefully listened to as evidenced in the Cared For Child Review, the Foster Carer Review, unannounced visits, at regular consultation events and through the sharing of notes and cards given to foster carers by children in their care.

In addition to the methods outlined above, outcomes for the service as a whole are measured in the following areas:

- Compliance
- Quality Assurance
- Educational attainment and attendance
- Placement stability
- Number of complaints and allegations
- Number of incidents of children going missing from care
- Number of accidents or other noteworthy incidents involving foster children
- Number of children with an up-to-date care plan and placement plan/Park's Foster Home Plan

Quarterly Regulation 35 Reports are completed to monitor Schedule 6 and 7 Matters.

This Statement of Purpose can be made available in another language or format, please let us know.



Services Provided by Park Foster Care

In order to meet these aims and objectives Park Foster Care provides the following services:

- Foster homes across the East & West Midlands and the North West providing care for children of different ages and abilities;
- Foster homes able to keep siblings together when needed;
- Foster homes where the child is the only child when needed (sometimes known as solo placements);
- Foster carers able to contribute towards the ongoing assessment of each foster child, supporting the development and review of the child's care plan as appropriate;
- Foster carers specifically trained to care for children with complex health needs;
- Foster carers specifically and intensively trained to provide Parent and Child Arrangements (the term 'arrangements' is the one preferred by the Department for Education)
- Sleepover periods (Respite) from Residential placements where young people get the chance to experience 'family life' over a weekend or short holiday period.
- Foster carers able to support a young person move on from residential care, also known as Step-Down. These often require additional planning and support packages tailored to the needs of the young person and skills and requirements of the foster family.

Learning and Development at Park Foster Care



Park Foster Care is committed to supporting its staff and foster carers to play an active role in their own learning and development. Park provides local venues and expects foster carers to use these opportunities as a platform for learning which requires involvement, energy and commitment to support carers to evolve as practitioners.

Park Foster Care will;

- Provide Skills to Foster Training to applicants;
- Provide a Prepare to Care group while applicants are going through the assessment process.
- Provide Induction Training for newly approved foster carers, which will also be available to existing foster carers who wish to 'refresh';
- Support will be provided with completing Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Care;
- Provide mandatory core training sessions, the details of which are outlined in this programme: Safeguarding & Safer Caring, Valuing Diversity, Recording & Reporting, Promoting Fostered Children & Young People's Health & Healthy Living or Cared for children & Health, Promoting Education, CSE and internet; First Aid 2 days.
- There will then be available courses that maintain carers learning and refresh their knowledge on an annual basis, this is a requirement under the legislation. Park will collate learning and development need through the foster carer review process which will shape the training programme;

- Training is provided via online courses with some offered face to face and some over Zoom/Teams.
- In addition we will hold monthly (but not in August) foster carer support groups which will include a reflective practice session;
- All foster carers and staff will be required to attend training on how to understand the elements of therapeutic parenting and how this supports good management of behaviour through Park's Parenting Approach programme and follow up courses, which builds on developing knowledge and skills;
- First Aid Training is a mandatory requirement for all foster carers, training will be provided by Park Foster Care;
- We will provide additional advanced courses, which will reflect the needs of the foster carer group and themes emerging in children services;
- Park Foster Care will provide each foster carer with a personalised training plan, which they are expected to attend, unless there are exceptional circumstances and they must inform the training administrator and their supervising social worker.

Park Foster Care expects:

- Foster carers to attend all mandatory training sessions in their first eighteen months of approval;
- Foster carers to develop their networks through attendance at foster carer fora;
- Foster carers to actively take responsibility for transferring their learning into practice;
- Foster carers to take responsibility for their learning needs by identifying and discussing them with their supervising social worker;
- Foster carers to have completed their TSD within twelve months of approval.
- Foster Carers to maintain their own PDP documenting their learning and development.

In addition to formal courses there are many other ways to develop learning;

- Learning from supervision sessions;
- Watching TV documentaries;
- Reading journals and books;
- Using videos and audio tapes;
- Visiting internet sites and using CD's;
- Using open learning packs (e.g. Open University);

- Learning from mentors/coaches;
- Reflecting on your work;
- Joining in formal discussions with other carers;
- Attending and contributing to foster carer support groups;
- Attending reflective practice/parenting forums;
- Reflecting on practice with our therapeutic social worker;

Foundation Courses

- Skills to Foster
- Prepare to care
- Induction Day; Safeguarding & Safer Caring, Valuing Diversity, Reporting & Recording
- First Aid;
- Park's Parenting Approach;
- CSE & Internet Safety
- PPA & developmental trauma (3 day course)

Advanced Courses

- Safeguarding & Safer Caring,
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Reporting & Recording
- Valuing Diversity
- Parenting with Attunement
- Promoting Education
- Supporting Children with Contact
- CSE & Internet Safety
- First Aid
- PPA & development trauma (3 day course)
- PPA & PACE;

Specialist Courses

- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Sexual Health

■ Caring with Compassion

Children and Young People

We ensure that all children are matched appropriately to foster carers and that the care provided is monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. All Foster Carers are appropriately approved, reviewed and have a signed Foster Carer Agreement. Wherever possible, a pre-move planning meeting is undertaken, including introductions between the Foster Carer and the child/young person. Keep safe assessments are started prior to placement and reviewed along with the Child Friendly Safe Care Plan. Care Plans and other essential information is requested prior to placement and chased up where necessary post placement.

Matching

All children are carefully matched to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be best met by the foster carers with relevant skills and experience. Matching documentation is completed by the Referral and Family Finding coordinator to evidence matching. Once a referral is received liaison takes place between Park Foster Care, Park SSW's, local authority professionals and our foster carers.

Decisions to place are overseen by a member of the management team to ensure that we make the best possible match for the child and foster carer. Children and young people will never be expected to share a bedroom with another fostered child or child of the foster carers, other than if they are brothers or sisters and it is appropriate to do so.

Recruitment, Assessment & Approval

Park Foster Care monitors information relating to referrals of children to ensure we target foster carer recruitment in the location, with the right skills and able to offer the right resource to meet local demand. The recruitment strategy will take account of the age, ethnicity, disability, location and other patterns of needs (e.g. asylum seeking children, parent and child) that emerge through this analysis. This strategy informs future recruitment activities.

Initial Enquiry - All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to rigorous assessment and vetting procedures. When there is an enquiry from a potential foster carer, Park makes contact by telephone and information gathering commences. If the enquirer meets the initial set of criteria an information pack is sent out.

Telephone Discussion - Telephone contact will then be made with the prospective foster carer within one working day to book a home visit.

Initial Visit - An initial visit takes place in the home of the prospective foster carer(s). Park Foster Care aims to book this within five working days from initial contact. If the Initial Visit is successful and both parties wish to proceed, the relevant documentation is discussed and application form is then able to be completed. An Initial Visit Report is completed.

Application Paperwork - The prospective Foster Carer(s) must complete an application form, also available online via Charms, giving detailed information about themselves and their family and consent to undertaking further checks and enquiries to determine their suitability to foster.

Applicant Preparation – Applicants are involved in their assessment with an emphasis on this being a two way process. A Preparation to Foster Pack is sent out for applicants to start completing their chronology, eco-map, life-story and support network details. This information is then discussed and explored during home visits.

Medical Check - The applicants are required to have a full medical assessment completed by their GP and the report is made available to our Agency Medical Adviser for comment about their health and any impact this may have on their fostering potential.

References - The applicants are asked to identify three personal referees who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. One of these can be a relative of the applicants. When applicants have had previous partners the agency requires their details as well: it is likely references will be sought from them, particularly when there are children from the relationship. References may also be taken up from previous employers.

References are taken in confidence but may not remain so: there may be a need to disclose the contents of a reference if it forms the basis of an agency decision not to approve a prospective carer.

Training - All applicant(s) are invited to Skills to Foster Training which is mandatory learning, covering the responsibilities of being a foster carer for Park Foster Care and the Park Parenting

Approach. A Prepare to Care support group is available to applicants during their assessment process.

Form F Assessment

Park use the BAAF Form F assessment tool. Following the Initial Visit and receipt of application form an Assessor will be allocated to the prospective foster carers and a Panel date tentatively set in 16 weeks. The Assessor will visit the applicants' home, approximately 8-10 times, to meet and collect the information about all members of the household and the applicants' skills and experiences in relation to fostering.

With the exception of private references, the completed Form F is shared with the prospective foster carers prior to being presented to the Fostering Panel. The report is quality assured and signed off by the Registered Manager or Practice Manager. This manager will then arrange and complete a Second Opinion Visit. This allows the applicants to verify they have read and agree with the content of the assessment, and for them to be able to feedback on the assessment process. A report must only be signed by the applicants, Assessor and Manager when all parties are happy with its content.

Information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file in line with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Data Protection Act 1998. Some of this information can be viewed, however references from external agencies and personal references, which are given in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and the relevant referee(s).

Foster Carer Agreements

A Foster Carer Agreement is completed following approval, covering a range of contractual information and undertakings, including:

- To care appropriately for the children and young people in their care;
- To inform Park Foster Care of any significant changes to their household or details;
- To work in line with the Fostering Regulations and Standards and other relevant legislation;
- To follow the procedures laid down in Park Foster Care's Handbook.

Reviews of Foster Carers

Park has adopted the BAAF Carer Review format which replaces the Form F up-date. Foster carers continue to be required to evidence the core competences a Foster Carer must demonstrate, in accordance with BAAF Form F.

The Foster Carer Review provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that the quality of Care provided meets the standards demanded by Park Foster Care. To be effective, the review has to be based upon reliable evidence regarding the standard of Care that has been provided. The Foster Carer Review should be seen as a process, considering a fresh the Foster Carer's approval and any significant changes in the household and support network. The Foster Carer Review is a key part of Park's approach to quality assurance.

The Foster Carer Review also provides an opportunity for the foster carer to provide feedback upon the quality of supervision and support they have received, and to reflect upon the learning and development needs of foster carers and their individual training profiles. Such information is analysed to develop the training strategy of the service as a whole.

Reviews take place in line with regulatory requirements of a Foster Carer (Regulation 28(2)). A first review must take place not more than a year after approval. Subsequent reviews take place within twelve months of the previous review, and every twelve months thereafter. Park must be satisfied that the foster carers continue to meet the required Standards (as set out in Regulation 28 (4)) and as a result of this reviews may be held within the 12 month period, for the following reasons;

- Following a serious complaint, allegation of abuse, or other matters of serious concern;
- In response to significant change of circumstances, such as a carer's adult child returning home, relationship problems or separations, significant health issues, pregnancy, etc.);
- At the request of the Fostering Panel;
- At the Foster Carer's request;

- Where the Foster Carer is taking on a new type of fostering (e.g. parent and child, or changing significantly the age range they will be fostering) thus requiring a change in their terms of approval.

Prior to the Review consultation and feedback will be required from the following:

- The Foster Carer;
- Any child currently cared for by the Foster Carer or having lived with them during the previous 12 months – subject to their age and understanding;
- Any local authority which has, within the preceding year had a child cared for by the Foster Carer;
- Birth children. All members of the fostering household;
- Birth parents of any fostered child, if appropriate;
- Any other enquiries will also be made to ensure that Park Foster Care obtain all relevant information as they consider necessary in order to review whether the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable;

The Supervising Social Worker prepares a report for the Review which must evaluate and weigh up the evidence gathered from formal supervisions undertaken during the period under review. All first reviews are considered by the Fostering Panel. All subsequent reviews take place with a Foster Carer Review meeting to consider the evidence gathered from the consultation / feedback. This meeting is attended by the Supervising Social Worker, Reviewing Officer and foster carers. The subsequent report completed by the Chair is considered by the ADM and, where appropriate, Fostering Panel. If, having considered the Annual Review, the Agency Decision Maker decides that approval should continue they will write to the Foster Carer(s) informing them of the decision and the terms of approval (Regulation 28 (6)). All first reviews are required by the regulations to be considered by the Fostering Panel.

Supporting Foster Carers to Care for Children

Park Foster Care values the work foster carers do and the contributions they make to the lives of looked after children. It is vitally important to provide appropriate levels of support to foster care families to ensure a positive and successful foster home. A creative and flexible

package of support is available to foster carers and the children and young people in their care. Identifying and arranging the necessary level of support required takes place when a foster carer and child/young person are “matched” at the initial planning stages. Support is monitored and tailored accordingly, while the child lives in the foster home.

All foster carers have a named, qualified and experienced Supervising Social Worker allocated to them.

The following is provided to all foster carers:

Supervising Social Worker

- Monthly supervision visits (taking place via Zoom/telephone through the pandemic);
- Frequent contact with foster carers and children being cared for through support visits and telephone calls (Extra precautions continue to be taken through the pandemic);
- Provision of guidance and advice to the foster carer in relation to their care of the children and young people;
- Liaison with other professionals who may be involved in the care of the child or young person and contribute to formal Care Plans;
- Identification of carers need for advice or further training and development;
- Maintenance of accurate records of the progress of all matters relating to the foster carer and the child/young person placed, including outcomes.

Parenting Forum's and Support Groups: Regular Parenting Forum's and Support Groups take place to enable foster carers to meet, socialise, share good practice, develop peer support and receive training and information. (Via Zoom through the pandemic and evening groups offered to ensure support where children are home-schooled this will continue with face to face groups taking place 4 times per year where safe to do so)

Emergency Support: Support is provided 24/7, 365 days a year through our on-call service and support to our foster carers. This service is staffed by a Supervising Social Worker who also has access to a social work qualified manager.

Policies and Procedures: All foster carers have access to a Foster Carer Handbook which provides access to Policies and Procedures, together with information and guidance on all

aspects of fostering. All information is regularly updated to comply with standards and regulations.

Foster Talk Membership: All foster carers are signed up to annual membership of Foster Talk, paid for by Park Foster Care, which provides advice and guidance as well as access to legal advice, mediation and insurance.

Finance: All Foster Carers receive an allowance and are entitled to 14 nights paid respite and receive a mileage allowance for excessive mileage undertaken.

Tax and National Insurance: All Foster Carers are self-employed and therefore responsible for paying their own tax and National Insurance. Foster Talk have a service which offers tax advice.

Unannounced Visits: All foster carers receive two unannounced visits a year (virtual during lockdown, now COVID risk assessed on the doorstep).

Family Events: Family Events occur during school holidays throughout the year and are an opportunity to:

- Meet and Socialise;
- Make new friends;
- Have fun.

Supporting Children and Young People: Supervising Social Workers visit all children and young people being cared for as part of the role of the Supervising Social Worker. Where children living with carers have complex needs, individual support packages of support for foster carers and children and young people are agreed to enable such children to live in a family environment.

Examples of generic support includes:

- Support from the allocated Social Worker from the child's Local Authority;
- Supervising Social Workers support which may include additional tasks where requested and funded appropriately by the Child's Local Authority;
- In some cases it is appropriate that foster carers supervise Family Time;
- Support to follow a hobby or interest;
- Life/Memory work;

- Young Persons' Guide;
- Permanency planning;
- Consultation events during school holidays;
- Attachment Support as agreed with the Placing Local Authority.

Outcomes: To support children to develop to their potential Park Foster Care is committed to ensuring:

- Children and young people are suitably matched into a foster family;
- Children and young people are healthy and supported to access leisure and health services;
- Any health needs are understood and monitored;
- Children and young people are safe;
- Foster Carers are appropriately recruited, trained, monitored and supervised;
- All children in care enjoy their experiences which promotes their development of self-confidence;
- All children in care attend education and thrive to the best of their ability;
- The recruitment of staff and foster carers is focused on children and young people;
- Children and young people in care are involved in decisions regarding their life.

Complaints and Compliments

Park Foster Care considers complaints to be a form of consultation. At their worst complaints raise safeguarding concerns that are likely to require immediate statutory investigation. At a lower level, complaints provide helpful feedback about how services provided by Park can be improved. Park promise to treat all complaints seriously and proportionately. We expect complaints to be reported and recorded clearly, quickly and passed on to the relevant manager for their urgent consideration at the first opportunity.

Who can make a complaint?

Park Foster Care will accept complaints from:

- Any child or young person who is, or has been, a foster child;

- The parent of a child or young person who is, or has been, a foster child;
- Any Park foster carer;
- Any placing authority, school or external agency involved with a looked after child or young person;
- Any independent worker commissioned by Park Foster Care

When a complaint is received from a person not listed above, the Head of Service will decide whether it should be accepted. Anonymous complaints are difficult to investigate however they may be accepted if the Head of Service feels that it is appropriate to do so.

Park recognises it can be very difficult for a young person to make a complaint about a service when they are living with carers. Young people may not feel confident enough to speak out for the, or may be worried about reprisals. It may be the case that they have had a poor experience of making complaints or raising concerns in the past. We are aware children and young people are more likely to complain once they have left the care arrangements that they have a complaint about.

For these reasons, Park Foster Care is committed to the following principles to respond to and investigate complaints:

- Quality of care concerns will be regarded as complaints;
- All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly;
- All children and young people making complaints will be supported by the agency;
- All complaints will be investigated in a timely way, with appropriate feedback about the progress of the investigation provided to the complainant in a format of their choosing.

Park Foster Care will seek to resolve complaints at an informal level where appropriate i.e. **Stage One** – Informal Resolution. Lead by the SSW.

Children and young people cared for by Park Foster Care are made aware of the Complaints Procedure by the Supervising Social Worker when they first move in with their foster carers, and provided with a Children's Guide giving contact details of who to contact about any aspect of their care. They will also be provided with the MOMO App to enable them to share their feelings and thoughts with the SSW in a less direct way should they wish to.

Foster Carers, Staff and Placing Authority Social Workers are provided with information about Park Foster Care's Complaints Policy through documentation, induction and Foster Home Plans.

It is not always possible to resolve a complaint at Stage One. On occasions a complaint may be serious enough that a person may elect to invoke **Stage Two** – Formal Investigation. This stage will be dealt with by the Practice Manager who will undertake a formal investigation. Where a complainant is not satisfied with the response received at Stage Two then the matter is referred to **Stage Three** – Review, of the procedure. At Stage Three the complaint will be passed to the Head of Service/Registered Manager who will address the matter with sensitivity.

Park Foster Care reserves the right to decide which level the complaint should be investigated and may, in the interests of the parties involved, pass the matter immediately to CareTech's Safeguarding and Policy Manager for the matter to be investigated using Stage Three of the Complaints Procedure.

Carer Allegations/ Whistle-Blowing: All allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, foster carer, or any other person in contact with children will be taken seriously by Park Foster Care and treated in accordance with current procedures.

All staff and Foster Carers are made aware of the organisations whistle-blowing policy and should feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Compliments: All compliments received from children, young people, Foster Carers, Local Authorities and any other body, are recorded by Park Foster Care on an electronic system and monitored on a regular basis.

Consultation

Park values the input of others i.e. children & young people, foster carers and local authorities. We seek to engage with all people who receive a service from Park Foster Care on a regular basis. More recently this has taken place via Zoom.

We use our events to gain verbal feedback from carer's and children including our book clubs which run every school holiday. We also use written formats and face to face visits to obtain carer's and children's views.

We arrange to meet with local authorities on at least an annual basis to talk through any issues or areas for discussion in relation to the contracts in place and working practices.

We also meet regularly with our Independent Reviewing Officers to discuss practice and development of the review processes.

Thank you for taking the time to read a little more about Park Foster Care and the services we offer. If you have any feedback, questions or queries please do get in touch with us:

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Park Foster Care

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<http://www.parkfostercare.com>

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