



Statement Of Purpose 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement as per the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services that each fostering agency produces a Statement of Purpose, including its aims and objectives, and a description of the services and facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements, how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It aims to show the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how good outcomes would be achieved for all children. It also demonstrates the systems that we will set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide that will be provided to all children, subject to their age and understanding at the point of placement.

This statement will be available to all staff, foster carers, children and will be publicly available on our fostering website. A copy of this statement is also being lodged with Ofsted.

This statement will be updated and amended periodically.

2. NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Britannia Fostering Agency will be run in accordance with the principles outlined in:

- ✓ The Children Act 1989
- ✓ Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- ✓ Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013 (Amendments to the Children Act 1989)
- ✓ Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- ✓ Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- ✓ Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- ✓ Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (Amendments) 2015
- ✓ The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- ✓ The Human Rights Act 1998
- ✓ The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- ✓ Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers



3. PRINCIPALS AND STANDARDS OF CARE

The values which underpin Britannia Fostering Agency accord with the values as given in the National Minimum Standards:

The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.

Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.

Children are entitled to grow up in a loving environment that can meet their developmental needs.

Every child should have his or her wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account.

Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with his/her individual needs and background in order to develop his/her identity, self-confidence and self-worth.

The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs are fully recognised and taken into account.

The significance of contact for looked after children, and of maintaining relationships with birth parents and the wider family, including siblings, half-siblings and grandparents, is recognised, as is the foster carer's role in this.

Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own children and to have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.

The central importance of the child's relationship with his/her foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child.

Foster carers have a right to full information about the child.



It is essential that foster carers receive relevant support services and development opportunities in order to provide the best care for children.

Genuine partnership between all those involved in fostering children is essential to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, fostering service providers and foster carers.

GIVEN THIS:

An Independent Reviewing Officer's (also known as IRO) main job is to make sure that your care plans which is all about you and where you will be living meets your needs.



- ✓ The welfare of the child or young person is deemed to be the paramount consideration in all decision making, planning and day-to-day work.
- ✓ We seek to maximise children and young people's life chances, by providing them with positive childhood experiences and the opportunity to reach their full potential as they move on into adulthood.
- ✓ We seek to achieve best practice in relation to the recruitment, training, assessment, supervision support and review of Foster Carers and this will underpin the maintenance of high standards of care for children and the meeting of individual needs.
- ✓ The fostering agency will respect all the ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language of both children and young people and Foster Carers.
- ✓ We regard Foster Carers as being members of the professional care team, and their opinions will be respected and given due weight in our planning for the children and young people in Foster Care.
- ✓ The views of foster families, children and young people in care, parents, the Children's Rights Officer, members of the Children's Social Care Teams and Independent Reviewing Officers will be sought and taken into account in monitoring, reviewing and developing the service.
- ✓ The fostering service works within the agency's equal opportunities policy in relation to staff, Carers and service users.

- ✓ The fostering service seeks to continuously evaluate and improve its service delivery to its clientele.
- ✓ The agency will work towards meeting all of the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011).

THE MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING OF STANDARDS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN THROUGH:

- ✓ Preparation and assessment processes for new Carers:
 1. Home visits will be offered to all prospective applicants considering applying to become Foster Carers, enabling in-appropriate applications to be screened out at an early stage
 2. BAAF Skills to Foster pre-approval training will be undertaken by all applicants interested in becoming mainstream Foster Carers.
 3. All prospective Carers' assessments will be completed in line with the BAAF Form F assessment
 4. All assessments are read by the Assistant Team Manager or Team Manager Placements Team prior to any application being considered by the Fostering Panel and any gaps addressed.
- ✓ The Fostering Panel considering all new applications to be approved as Foster Carers.
- ✓ An appeal process being in place should applicants be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application.
- ✓ An Induction Programme being provided for all newly approved Carers (Common Introduction and Training Standards).
- ✓ The provision of high quality post-approval training specifically applicable to the role of Carers.
- ✓ Regular supervision and support being provided to all approved Carers by a qualified Supervising Social Worker with specialist knowledge of Fostering, through:



1. Regular supervisory visits – at least four weekly intervals
2. The completion of regular Health and Safety Checks – at least annually
3. The completion of periodic ‘unannounced visits’ to all approved Carers – at least 2 annually
4. Placement Planning Meetings – within 5 working days of the placement being made

✓ Placement Support Meetings – when appropriate.

✓ The completion of Annual Foster Carer Reviews by a Fostering Reviewing Officer.



✓ Quality assurance of all reports completed for presentation to the Authority’s Foster Panel.

✓ The hosting of regular Support Groups, including :

1. BAAF Skills to Foster pre-approval training will be undertaken by all applicants interested in becoming mainstream Foster Carers.
2. Young person’s support group- four per year

✓ Foster Carers’ progression being linked to:

1. Carers’ skills and experience
2. Training
3. Contribution to the service as a whole for example recruitment and retention, mentoring, delivering foster carer training

✓ Seeking regular Service User feedback through:

1. Foster Carer Reviews including feed-back from Carers, Social Workers, IROs, Carers’ own children, Children who have been placed and the parents of children who have been placed.

2. Information shared at the quarterly meetings with Independent Fostering Reviewing Officers.
 3. Foster Care Forum
 4. Child in Care Reviews
 5. End of Placement Reports including feedback from Children in Care and their Social Workers.
 6. End of Placement Reports including feedback from Children in Care and their Social Workers.
 7. Foster carer events where the carers can speak to middle and senior managers who normally attend and take the opportunity to talk to foster carers on an informal basis.
- ✓ Actively inviting Carers' feedback on any planned changes to any aspect of the Service that directly impacts on them.
 - ✓ The hosting of a regular Foster Care Forum – enabling Carers to address issues directly with senior members of the Children's Services Management Team.
 - ✓ Maintaining a reasonable Supervising Social Worker/Carer ratio
 - ✓ Providing 24 hour support including a dedicated Out of Hours Carers' Support Line.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Britannia fostering agency which primarily seek to promote the upbringing of children by their families in accordance with the spirit and provision of the Children Act 1989. When it is either not safe or not appropriate for a children to remain in the care of his/her/their birth parent(s) the agency aims to promote the best possible outcomes for the children concerned through the provision of high quality substitute family care, wherever possible with a relative or friend of the children, but where this is not possible with a mainstream foster carer.



The priorities of the fostering agency are:

1. To provide, where appropriate, the opportunity for all children and young people in care to experience positive family life through the provision of high quality substitute family placements
2. To match children referred to the agency for placement with Carers who are able to meet their identified needs.
3. To safeguard and protect the wellbeing of children and young people placed with Britannia fostering agency approved Foster Carers, whether as a voluntary arrangement or under a Court Order.
4. To work together with the Children's Social Care Teams and other staff and agencies involved, to promote the life chances of children in care so that they are able to achieve the best possible educational, social and health attainments and achievements.
5. To provide flexible and responsive support to the Local Authority and to the agency's approved Foster Carers and their families including regular, high quality supervision in order to maximise the success of each child's placement.
6. To monitor and maintain standards of care through regular contact, supervisory visits and consultation with social workers, children and young people in care and parents.
7. To encourage the whole organisation to value and respect the contribution of Foster Carers and to work in partnership with them.
8. To recruit a range of Carers, able to meet the individual needs of the children and young people requiring placement.
9. To ensure that the recruitment, supervision, support and review of Carers is underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures that are in line with current legislative and regulatory requirements and that reflect 'best practice'.
10. To actively involve the agency's approved Foster Carers in the planning of services.



11. To work within the Britannia's Children's Services policies and procedures and to contribute to the development of these policies and procedures where appropriate.
12. To maintain effective systems for recording, managing and keeping safe, information about Foster Carers and the children and young people placed in their care and information received from third parties.
13. To ensure that allegations, complaints and Standards of Care issues are addressed promptly and thoroughly, in-line with the Authority's relevant policies and procedures.

5. BRITANNIA FOSTERING AGENCY'S VALUES

Children

- ✓ Children are valued as individuals.
- ✓ Children feel and are safe and protected, free from fear and danger.
- ✓ Children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- ✓ Children enjoy their childhood and are given the opportunity for social engagement in their communities.
- ✓ Challenge discrimination and celebrate diversity.
- ✓ Ensure children's voices are heard and that they have the right to participate in decisions about their care.
- ✓ Support young people in making a smooth transition towards adult life and in shaping their own destiny.

Carers

- ✓ Value working with carers as partners.
- ✓ Support and enable carers to be competent and confident and meet required standards.
- ✓ Recruit as many carers as possible to meet the diverse needs of children in care.
- ✓ Ensure we provide year-round, including out of hours, support for foster carers and their own children.



Work as a Team

- ✓ Value and respect each team member.
- ✓ Always be available to support each other.
- ✓ Embrace a multi-disciplinary approach to our work.
- ✓ Be receptive to feedback and act upon it.
- ✓ Focus energy where it adds best value.
- ✓ Go the extra mile in pursuit of excellent care.

Lead by Example

- ✓ Act with integrity.
- ✓ Listen and act professionally.
- ✓ Be receptive to new ideas.
- ✓ Communicate effectively.
- ✓ Be creative and flexible in seeking solutions.
- ✓ Expect high quality performance always.
- ✓ Strive to exceed targets.
- ✓ Enjoy what we do.
- ✓ Work with a range of partners to ensure good standards of care.



6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Foster carers will be provided with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on carers and children in care that are subject to

Data Protection legislation.

Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest arises, Britannia Fostering Agency will prepare a risk assessment to manage the risk.

7. CHILDREN'S GUIDE

Subject to a child's age and understanding, the fostering service ensures children receive the Children's Guide at the point of placement and that foster carers explain the content of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible and can be understood. The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, and how a child can contact Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Commissioner and Ofsted.



8. SERVICES PROVIDED

The Fostering Service aims to develop and maintain a range of foster care placements to meet the needs of children and young people.

Many of the children placed have experienced difficulties, including abuse or neglect, before being fostered. Britannia Fostering Agency assess, approve and support a wide range of carers to provide a range of placements to match children's diverse needs.

All Britannia foster carers are financially supported through payment of appropriate remuneration in respect of each child in placement. They comply with Regulations, Statutory Guidance, the National Minimum Standards and the Britannia Fostering Agency – Statement of Purpose – 2021 Page 11 Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Carers.

Britannia Fostering Agency offers the following categories of placement:

Short term care

Care up to 2 years' duration or a period in keeping with the care plan for the child and court timetabling. Such carers are often involved in moving children on to other placements in a planned way.

Long-term care

Care offering permanence through to adulthood for children who have been formally matched with their carers. This includes an engagement with the 'Staying Put' scheme when the child reaches 18 years old.

Respite care

Short breaks for children to support them in the community or whilst their own foster carers are away.

Emergency placements

We aim to provide a 24 hour a day emergency service. Many carers choose to specialise in short term work and are able to accept unplanned, emergency placements.

An emergency placement ideally should not exceed a few days and it would be anticipated that the child

or young person should be moved to a more suitable placement within a week in a planned way.



Bridging placements

We can provide bridging placements for children or young people while permanency plans are being formulated. In such placements, our foster carers work with children/young people and their families toward reunification, or prepare children/young people for joining adoptive or long term/permanent fostering families, or for moving to a semi-independent or an independent living arrangement.

Solo placements

To look after children and young people who may make considerable demands upon them and also upon the services of the Agency. However, occasionally a child or young person has very specific and complex needs which, initially at least, require a higher than usual level of support, monitoring and supervision. Because of his/her needs, a child or young person may require constant individual attention and supervision that precludes the placement of any other fostered children/young people or prohibits the use of any remaining placement vacancies within the foster home. With such placements there is usually higher-level input from the Agency.

Unaccompanied Minors

To build a pool of very experienced foster carers from diverse backgrounds who are willing to advocate, access services and work within the child's care plan in supporting and caring for unaccompanied children and young people from outside the UK.

Disability placements

Foster carers who have experience and skills in caring for children and young people who are disabled and/or require specialist medical care.

Sibling placements

Sibling placements are for brother and sisters who all are placed together into a foster care household. We believe in keeping siblings together within a family environment, unless it is deemed inappropriate by the placing Authority.

Parent and child placements

Placements are available for mothers and/or fathers and their child, where foster carers can provide support and guidance to parent(s) and help them develop parenting skills. If requested, and by arrangement with the placing Local Authority, a formal assessment of parenting ability can be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced Britannia staff in conjunction with the Britannia foster carer. Comprehensive written assessment reports, for use in child protection conferences, planning meetings, statutory reviews or court proceedings, can be prepared.

9. RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER CARERS

There is a need for more placements for teenagers. There is also a need for more placements for children requiring long-term care, children with disabilities, those who are part of a sibling group or are from a black or minority ethnic group.



The fostering service has an ongoing recruitment strategy that uses a variety of media to recruit new carers. The strategy is informed by research on the most successfully employed advertising methods and is targeted to help ensure all children have a placement choice.

10. APPROVAL AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

People over the age of 21 may apply to become foster carers with Britannia Fostering Agency. Prospective carers who wish to have further information will be invited to a coffee morning and visited by a suitably qualified employee of the Britannia Fostering Agency – Statement of Purpose – 2021 Page 13 fostering service to explore further the process of becoming a foster carer. All applicants are assessed by a social worker.

Interest is welcomed from all members of the community, regardless of relationship status, employment situation, class, gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity or religion.

Full statutory checks and references are undertaken on all applicants and DBS checks on any member of the household over the age of 18 years. There is immediate exclusion of any applicant who has been convicted of any serious offence against a child or adult.

All applicants are invited to attend a course of pre-approval training during, and as part of the assessment process. The preparation training covers areas such as child development; separation and loss; working together, managing complex behaviours and safe care. The assessment process involves completion of the Coram BAAF Form F assessment form and is compliant with the fostering services' use.

Regulations and Statutory Guidance

The assessment of a foster Carer takes place in the applicant's home over a period of six to eight visits, plus reference interviews and interviews involving other relevant parties. The social worker will assess past and present experiences, any significant relationships, family dynamics and the characteristics of the foster carers to inform the assessment. The assessor will also use this process to assess the applicant's suitability to foster children with differing needs. The assessment is then presented to the fostering panel.



Britannia Fostering Agency fostering panel makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker who then makes a final decision. Any appeals can be made within 28 days and may either make further representation to the fostering panel or have their assessment considered by the Independent Review Mechanism which in turn will make a recommendation back to the agency.



11. SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND TRAINING OF FOSTER CARERS

- ✓ All foster carers are supported and supervised by a supervising social worker. Foster carers may also contact Britannia Fostering Agency for advice and support.
- ✓ Foster carers can still access support from Britannia Fostering Agency staff outside of office hours.
- ✓ Foster carers have access to a developing network of support groups and in-house training.
- ✓ Foster carers who are assessed as needing respite on a planned basis can access respite services with other foster carers.
- ✓ Foster Carers have access to an equipment store for items such as car seats and baby equipment.
- ✓ Foster Carers are provided with membership of the Fostering Network/alike service including independent support and legal advice.
- ✓ On approval, foster carers are required to undertake a programme of continuing professional development and are offered training that reflects their knowledge, skills and developmental needs.

12. REVIEWS OF FOSTER CARERS

All foster carers are subject to an annual review of their status as foster carers. This is a formal review of the work they have undertaken during the year and includes an opportunity to reflect on achievements and learning. Annual reviews are undertaken by an Independent Reviewing Officer and will hope to draw on contributions from a wide range of other people who contribute to the care they provide.

A report is presented to the fostering panel in the case of all first reviews, significant changes to the carers' registration or cases of concern.

13. SAFEGUARDING AND ALLEGATIONS

If the Agency believes there is a safeguarding concern they will adhere to the safeguarding procedures of the relevant Local Authority and notify the Local Authority's children's social care team by telephone as a matter of priority. Please see Britannia Fostering Agency Safeguarding Procedures.

All allegations in relation to foster carers are investigated by the Team Manager and reported to the Designated Officer (formerly called LADO) in line with Britannia Fostering Agency Safeguarding Procedures.

Foster Carers are offered independent support during this process from The Fostering Network/alike service.

14. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

Overall responsibility for Britannia Fostering Agency rests with the Director.

Overall responsibility for all practice related matters rests with the Registered Manager.



The performance of Britannia Fostering Agency will be monitored at several levels and in a variety of ways:

- ✓ Ofsted inspects Britannia Fostering Agency to ensure it complies with the Social Care Inspection Framework which focuses 'on the things that matter most to children's lives'.

- ✓ Britannia Fostering Agency's overall business performance is monitored by the Senior Management Team, chaired by the Director.
- ✓ Individual staff performance is monitored in staff supervision. Activity will be monitored, and targets set, against agreed actions.

15. MANAGEMENT OF THE SERVICE: STRUCTURE AS OF OCTOBER 2020

Director
Ashraf Amir

Registered Manager
Monis Iqbal

Responsible Individual
Ashraf Amir

16. STAFFING

There are 2 qualified social workers across the service (including managers) with differing responsibilities for and within the agency. All social workers hold a social work qualification and are registered with the Social Work England (Regulatory body for social workers in England).

17. COMPLAINTS

Britannia Fostering Agency has a complaints procedure. The procedure is made available to all children, parents and foster carers. A guide to making complaints is also available for children who are placed with foster carers and is in the **Children's Guide**.

You can contact us at:

Britannia Fostering Agency

Address: Balfour Business Centre, 390-392, High Road, IG1 1BF

Email / Phone numbers / website: to be confirmed

All complaints made to the service will be subject to a monitoring procedure. This will assist the service to develop.



