



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2017/18

(A Children's Guide is available to this Statement of Purpose and should be given to children when they convene their foster placement)



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1. Introduction

Perpetual Fostering was established in 2005 and is part of the Perpetual Care Group, a leading provider of social care services.

The Perpetual care Group provides;

- Fostering Services for children and young people, children with disabilities, mother and babies and young people who are stepping down from residential services
- Adult Mental Health Residential Services
- Adolescent Mental Health Therapeutic Residential Services
- Assertive Outreach Services

Our statement of purpose has been developed to meet the requirements of the following legislation;

- The Care Standards Act 2000,
- The Fostering Services Regulations 2011/2013,
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 (England and Wales)
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Children Act 1989

Our statement is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is also available on our fostering website. A copy of this statement is also lodged with Ofsted.

The information contained will be regularly updated and will be amended annually.



2. National Legislative and Policy Framework

Our Fostering Service is run in accordance with the principles outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Children and Young persons Act 2008
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011/2013.
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015

We also strive to follow the best practices outlined in;

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care 2007.



3. Aims and Objectives

The main aim of Perpetual Fostering is to provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals.

As well as promoting their health and general well-being the service is committed to ensuring that foster carers are encouraged to help children and young people to reach their maximum educational ability.

Together with our Foster Carers we provide;

- Children and young people with high quality foster care.
- A safe, secure and nurturing environment.
- The opportunity for children to enjoy their childhood and benefit from good parenting and education.
- A wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, and this leading to a successful adult life.

Together we ensure that our services are outcome focused making sure that all;

- children's interests are represented
- children are safeguarded
- children's welfare is best supported and protected in stable, safe and secure placements
- Children's educational attainment is promoted.
- Children are encouraged to make a proactive contribution.



4. Services and Facilities

Perpetual Fostering offers the following services:

- Emergency placements
- Short term fostering placements for looked after children for whom the plan is reunification with their immediate or extended family.
- Respite/ Short term breaks for children with complex health needs
- Foster Care for those children for whom adoptive or long term/permanent placements are being sought
- Long term foster care for those children for whom permanence via fostering is an option.
- Staying Put arrangements
- Placements for parents and children
- Placements for young people who are in need of a plan for semi independence
- Step Down/ Wrap Around Services for Children and Young People moving from residential care into a fostering placement.

5. Principles & Standards of Care

At Perpetual Fostering we maintain our high standards of care through our robust quality assurance framework and regular reviews of our services provision. This is further supported by our full compliance with the Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011/2013) and National Minimum Standards (England 2011) and the open, honest and transparent partnerships that we develop with our foster carers and our partners.

- We regularly seek feedback from our foster carers, birth children, children and young people, our partner agencies and we use this to develop our service further.
- Our foster carers have continuing training in line with DfE Training Support and Development Standards and receive high quality supervision and support from qualified social workers. Our foster carers are further supported within their role by the provision of access to 24 hour telephone support seven days a week, 365 days a year.
- We also provide our foster carers with monthly support groups, peer mentoring and the opportunity to attend social activities for themselves and the whole fostering household, thus supporting a real sense of community within our agency.
- We visit children in placement both on an announced and unannounced basis
- We do not permit corporal punishment under any circumstances. We provide our foster carers with guidance and training on the use of, and written recording of any sanctions and the implementation of de-escalating situations.
- Our foster carers will keep daily written records on each child and young person.
- Our foster carers and staff have a duty and responsibility to maintain vigilance around confidentiality and to comply with the agencies confidentiality policy and procedures.
- All assessments are completed by qualified and experienced staff, with applicants actively participating.
- All foster carers have attended Skills to Foster Training.
- Foster carers will have continuing training and personal development, including an induction programme, TSD Standards Workbooks, QCF (or equivalent).
- We will ensure each foster carer and foster home complies with all Health and Safety and Risk Assessment requirements.
- Foster carers work within the Terms of the Placement Agreement and to an agreed Care Plan.
- Every foster carer has an annual review, based upon their performance for the year and this is presented to our fostering panel.
- Every child that moves into a placement has their progress reviewed within the first six months by our agency to ensure that outcomes are being promoted and achieved.
- Children and young peoples academic achievement and school attendance is robustly monitored and supported.

The fostering service aims to provide high quality care for fostered children which protects them from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation and which places children with carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment to promote best outcomes for their future.

5. Principles & Standards of Care (continued)

Perpetual Fostering aims to ensure that any person(s) working in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children/ young people and safeguard and promote their welfare. This is achieved through robust recruitment and employment processes.

All social worker staff and managers are recruited in accordance with Perpetual Fostering's recruitment, selection and vetting policies, which follow good practice in safeguarding children/ young people. Disclosure & Barring Service checks will be undertaken prior to appointment and subsequently every three years.

All social worker staff in the fostering service are qualified to work with children/ young people, their families and foster carers and have an understanding of foster care. All social workers are required to be registered with HCPC.

Staff who are not qualified in social work do not carry out assessments of applicant foster carers, and carry out their function under direct supervision of qualified social work staff.

All staff will receive regular professional supervision and job consultation by appropriately qualified and experienced staff and are provided with opportunities for ongoing training in child care and respect of fostering issues.

The approval of all foster carers is in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations (2011/2013) and the National Minimum Standards. Disclosure & Barring Service checks will be undertaken prior to approval of any foster carer and subsequently every three years.

Foster carers receive monthly supervision and annual reviews are undertaken by their supervising social worker. Any incident/ situation of concern is presented to the fostering panel for consideration of the approval status of the foster carer.

The whistle blowing policy is made known to all foster carers and staff and other relevant policy and procedure where they have a concern about other professionals or children in their care, i.e. child protection policy, LADO procedures.

Membership of the fostering panel is dependant on satisfactory outcome of appropriate checks and fitness to carry out the role of panel.

The fostering panel ensures that the assessment of foster carer applicants comply with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations (2011/2013)

The fostering panel provides expertise in child and foster care. It accesses expertise in child health and education issues. The panel makes independent recommendations regarding approvals, terms of approval, continuing approval and termination of approval of foster carers.

The matching policy and procedures are robust and clear to promote good and safe practice in this area and placement longevity.

Foster Carers are:

Provided with clear information in respect of permissible and non-permissible forms of control, discipline and sanctions. The foster carer agreements is explicit that no child should be subject to corporal punishment, or humiliating treatment. In certain circumstances measures may be taken to prevent a child from harming themselves or others. Risk assessments will be undertaken where restraint or risk taking behaviour is a concern.

Required to provide warm and adequately furnished homes maintained to a good standard of hygiene and to provide each child with his/ her own bed and private space. Foster carer's homes are inspected at least annually to ensure compliance and planned and unplanned visits are undertaken by the fostering service and are also seen monthly. This includes the children and young people's bedroom.

Supported by Perpetual Fostering in the provision of an environment free of avoidable hazards that might expose the child to risk of injury or harm.

Receive training on safe care and health and safety issues and receive full information about any child placed with them in order to ensure protection of the child, any other children in the household and other family members.



6. Valuing Diversity

We ensure that children and young people live in an environment which promotes equality and diversity. We respect every individual irrespective of their gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality.

We endeavour to match children and young people with the most suitable foster carers who will be able to meet their religious and cultural needs alongside their global needs consistently.

- We place children with carers of matching racial and cultural heritage where ever possible. Where this is not possible, we work with the child, their birth family, the foster carers and our partner agencies to ensure that every opportunity is created and embraced to support the individual child's ethnicity and culture.
- Facilitates the provision for children with complex health needs, of services and support including equipment and adaptations, which enable them to access as wide a range of activities as possible to maximise their potential to lead as full a life as possible that is inclusive sociably and educationally.
- Assist and encourage foster carers and provides training which promotes their ability to promote a child's confidence, self worth, identity and their wishes and feelings.
- Aims to ensure that each child is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting his/her assessed needs in terms of culture, religion, ethnic origin, gender, disability, language and sexuality and where possible ensures the placement of sibling together.
- Foster carer provides an emotionally warm and secure home environment whilst offering the highest quality of care.
- Any safeguarding issues will be dealt with immediately following the company's agreed procedures for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.



7. Promoting Contact

Perpetual Fostering takes its duty to promote contact between child and family and friends seriously in accordance with the agencies contact policy. Contact contributes to the development of the child's sense of identity, self worth and self-esteem and can go a long way in helping placements become stable and meaningful to children and young people.

We ensure that foster carers promote agreed contact with the child/ young person's families unless this is considered not to be in the child's/ young person's best interest.

We take into account the contact needs of the child/ young person in determining contact needs and arrangements. We provide training to enable foster carers to help a child maintain appropriate contacts and facilitate contact. We contribute and attend the statutory reviews wherein contact arrangements are agreed, established, maintained and monitored.

We ensure financial support is provided to carers who incur costs in facilitating contact between a fostered child and their family or friends. We ensure that foster carers understand the importance of recording the impact of contact arrangements upon children in their care.

8. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

a) Recruitment of foster carers

Perpetual Fostering is committed to recruiting foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people through the provision of high quality care.

The Fostering Service has a recruitment strategy which is overseen by the Chief Executive and The Registered Service Manager. Recruitment campaigns aim to provide both a realistic and positive portrayal of foster care; the campaigns are designed to generate relevant and quality responses. General recruitment activity is undertaken on a rolling programme throughout the year through the local press and media, through leafleting campaigns and through the promotion of articles about fostering in the local press. Our web site permanently advertises for new foster carers. Recruitment materials are updated regularly and high quality display materials have been purchased. Targeted campaigns are conducted in addition to general recruitment activity.

These are triggered when there is an identified need for carers to meet children with specific needs. Recruitment activity and pre-approval training are planned to occur so as to reduce delay between the first contact from an applicant carer and approval. Training takes the form of a three day preparatory training course with materials supplied from the Fostering Network and presented by an experienced trainer. Generally training courses are held as and when required and are designed to give a realistic portrayal of foster care as "Skills to Foster". At Perpetual Fostering we are continually developing our recruitment strategy and consult with existing foster carers and Partner Agencies. The recruitment of carers is carried out in accordance with the Fostering Regulation (2011/2013) and the National Minimum Fostering Standards.

b) Initial Enquiries and Screening Process

The fostering team operates a duty system whereby a member of team will respond to enquiries from potential applicants within 48 hours.

Once an expression of interest is received from a prospective carer and basic information is completed through our screening process, it is then passed to the Fostering Service Manager to make a decision about the progression of the applicant. If successful it is then allocated to a Qualified Social Worker who will then make arrangements to visit the prospective carer in their home for an Initial 'Screening' Visit.

During the initial home visit, the qualified social worker provides more detail of the nature of the fostering task, the required competencies, skills and aptitudes of foster carers and of the assessment process and time scales. This means that the decision of applicants to proceed is well informed and appropriate. This visit is a two way discussion and information gathering process by both the potential foster carer and the agency.

The outcome and recommendations of the qualified social worker of the initial screening visit is considered by the Registered Manager and suitable candidates will then be invited to attend a three day training programme called 'Skills to Foster'. They are then assigned a qualified social worker to undertake a comprehensive and robust assessment.

8. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

c) Assessment Process

The assessment process consists of a number of components and requires the consent of applicants for checks to be undertaken on themselves and any members of the household over 16 years with the Disclosure and Barring Service, probation service, NSPCC the Department of Health and other social services departments.

Applicants are required to provide at least two personal referees who will provide written references and be available for interview as part of the assessment process. Applicants are required to have a full medical examination by their GP which will be made available to the agency medical advisor for their comments. (STAGE 1)

Assessments of applicants' child care experience, skills and competencies, their social, professional and environment background are conducted by a qualified fostering social worker, over a period of time. The assessment is quality assured and supervised by the Registered Manager. The assessing social worker visits the applicant's home a minimum of 8 occasions, over a set period with the occasional need for further visits, to meet and collect information about all members of the household. The information gained forms the basis of an assessment report compiled in accordance with the Form F format published by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF 2014). All assessments are carried out using a competence based assessment. Potential foster carers will be expected to compile a portfolio of competencies and comply with TSDs for foster carers. Full participation from prospective carers and their family is a requirement as the assessment is a joint project.

(STAGE 2)

Applicants are required to undertake preparation training prior to assessment. This training covers the responsibilities of foster carers and is based on 'Skills to Foster' materials provided by 'The Fostering Network'. All applicant carers receive the training manual to support the course. Family and friends of applicants who are likely to have direct involvement or regular contact with a prospective foster placement can attend the preparatory training if they wish.

The assessment report is shared with applicants except for references. The assessment in its entirety is presented to the Perpetual Fostering panel and the attendance of applicants is encouraged and facilitated by Perpetual Fostering. A second social worker home visit is undertaken following the completion of a Form F Assessment. This is to ensure the quality of the assessment and also ensures feedback is received from applicants on the assessment process.

8. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

d) Fostering Panel and Approval of Foster Carers

The fostering panel is established by Perpetual Fostering in accordance with the requirements of Fostering Regulations (2011) and National Minimum Standards. The Fostering Panel aims to:

Provide a body of experience and skilled personnel, suitable to work with children and perform its functions ethically and efficiently in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations (2011) and the National Minimum Standards.

Provide expertise in child and foster care, child health, education issues, child protection and to make independent recommendations regarding approvals, terms of approval, continuing approval and termination of approval of foster carers.

Ensure that the assessment of foster carer applicants comply with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations (2011/2013).

Advise and support Perpetual Fostering in the provision of a range of foster carers which promotes the placement of looked after children in families who can meet their assessed needs in terms of culture, religion, ethnic origin, gender, disability, language, sexuality and the placement of siblings together.

Consider all foster carer applicants equally and with equal rigour, irrespective of their age, race, gender, disability or sexuality consistent with the needs of the children requiring foster care. Provide advice on the training and support needs of foster carers and their families in order that they can carry out their role effectively and improve their competence and skills.

Ensure the safety and protection of foster children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation and the provision of nurturing and loving environments which promote the fostered child's sense of worth, self-esteem and emotional well being.

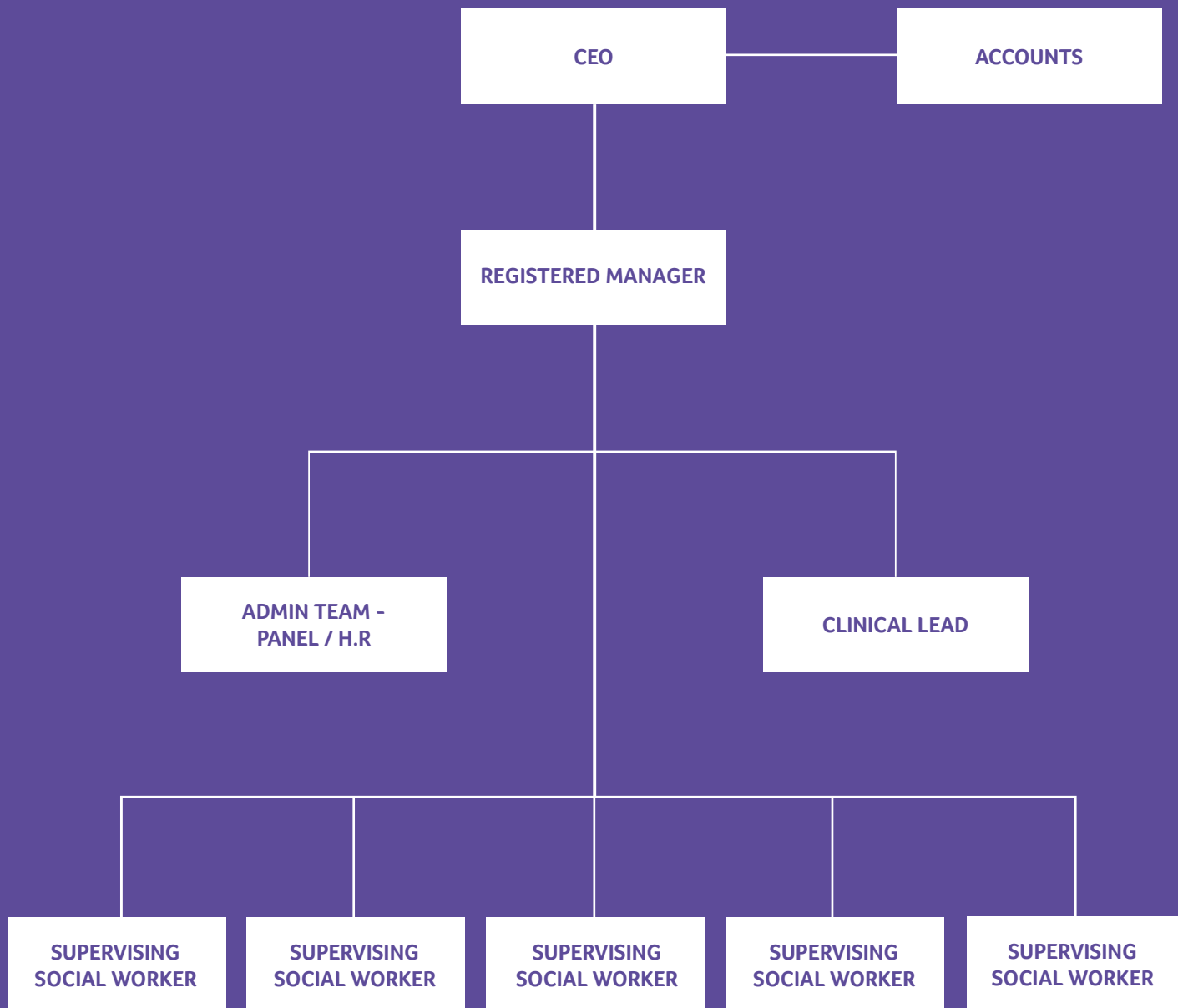
e) The Functions and Processes of the Fostering Panel

Prior to appointment all fostering panel members are subject to statutory checks, including references and DBS checks, to ensure their suitability to work within the children's service and they are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Termination of membership of the panel will be effected in writing at any time in the event that a panel member is no longer considered a suitable member. The Fostering Panel is fully up to date with profile and photos and the agency will advertise for relevant professionals to sit on the panel to ensure its core membership standards.

The fostering panel sits on a regular basis usually bi monthly, with the dates being set at the beginning of each year. Additional 'emergency' panels are convened if necessary. The attendance of foster carers or prospective foster carers is encouraged and facilitated by Perpetual Fostering. Panel papers are distributed to panel members via the agency electronic portal, in good time wherever possible. At the conclusion of the panel any papers are retained by the panel administrator and he/ she undertakes their destruction by placing in the confidential waste.

The panels decision making is based on the principal of majority voting. In the event that panel decision is not unanimous the minutes will record any opposing views to those of the majority and they will be drawn to the specific attention of the agency decision-maker. In circumstances where the decision is tied and the panel cannot through any other means reach a majority consensus, then the chair's vote will prevail and the situation will be drawn for the specific attention of the agency decision-maker.

10. Management Structure





13. Complaints

At Perpetual Fostering a key focus is that the appropriate information and support systems are always in place. We have a comprehensive complaints procedure which is made available to all staff who work for Perpetual Fostering, to foster carers and all those involved in the placement of a child. Emphasis is placed on resolving complaints at an early stage where possible.

- Children/young people are provided information about their right to complain, the complaints procedure and their right of access to an independent visitor in situations where they have no contact with their birth family.
- Children are provided with a Children's Guide to the Statement of Purpose when they are placed in foster placement.
- Complaints about the quality of care provided by foster carers are investigated through Perpetual Fostering's complaints and child protection procedures. Complaints and their outcome will be recorded, monitored and evaluated by the fostering service.

Allegations of abuse made against foster carers are investigated in accordance with the LCSB child protection procedures; these contain specific procedures for dealing with such allegations. The agency will also consult Working Together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2015 to inform their practice and decisions. Between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2017 we received no complaints against the Agency.

For a copy of our Complaints Procedure or to make a complaint, please contact our Registered Fostering Services Manager on **01204 364 666**.



Other support available to all foster carers:

Out of Hours Service

The out of hours service is staffed by qualified social workers who provides an out of hours service and are available 24 hours a day, at weekends and during national holidays. During office hours the Head Office number is also available for assistance. The out of hours service staff communicate any out of hours contact to child care social workers, supervising social workers and The Registered Manager, by 9.30am on the next working day in order that follow up support is forthcoming.

Foster Talk

At the point of approval foster carers are subscribed to Foster Talk. This membership provides them with additional support in the form of a help line and independent representation in the event of complaints or allegations.

The Foster Carers Handbook

All Foster Carers have a handbook which gives factual information which they need to know about the service. This includes safe caring issues, the role of social workers, and procedures in a condensed format. This will be updated annually to accommodate best practice and service improvement.

Training

Perpetual Fostering will provide training relevant to the fostering task that is mandatory and provides core training for all approved carers.



Contact Details:

For further information contact **Lisa Witter (Registered Manager)**, our **Supervising Social Workers** or our **Administration Team** at the **Perpetual Fostering Head Office**.

Address:

Perpetual Fostering, 31 Chorley New Road, Bolton BL1 4QR

Tel: 0845 130 4748

Fax: (01204) 394 850

Web: www.perpetualfostering.co.uk

Email: info@perpetualfostering.co.uk

Inspection and registration of the Fostering Service

Inspection and registration of the Fostering Service is carried out by Ofsted who can be contacted at the following address:

Address:

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231