



**F5 Foster Care**  
CHOOSE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



# Statement of Purpose

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This document sets out the aims and objectives of F5 Foster Care Ltd and of the facilities and services provided as per the requirements of the National Minimum Standards 2011.

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# Section 1: Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance relevant to:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services Regulations
- (England 2011 (Amendments 2013))
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England 2011)
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (Amendments 2013)
- National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

This Statement of Purpose is produced to provide information for foster carers, workers and children placed with the organisation. The document has been produced by the Registered Manager in conjunction with the Responsible Individual. A copy of the Statement of Purpose is will be provided, and/or made available upon request, to:

- Chief Inspector of Ofsted
- Any person working for the purposes of the fostering service
- Any child (subject to their age and understanding) placed with a foster carer of the fostering service and the parent of any such child.
- This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually or whenever necessary following changes to the service.

F5 Foster Care Ltd is an Independent Fostering Agency which places looked after children in registered foster homes on behalf of placing local authorities.

# Section 2: Our Core Values

F5 Foster Care takes its name from the values and beliefs which the creation of the service was based upon:

- 'F5'
- **Foster Carers** – We recruit our committed Foster Carers with a diverse range of skills, knowledge and cultures in order to offer wider and more closely matching placement opportunities.
- **Families** – Supporting and caring for our foster families, respecting children's birth families.
- **Futures** – Recognising that providing excellent reflective care everyday supports the child's journey to a brighter future.
- **Fairness** – Valuing diversity and celebrating what makes each child unique.
- **Feedback** – We actively encourage feedback from children and young people, our Carers and the Placing Local Authorities.

# Section 3: Aims and Objectives

Our primary aim is to provide a high-quality fostering service to looked after children and young people by providing foster placements where each child will have stability, and a warm, safe, caring environment in which to thrive.

## **F5 Foster Care's objectives are:**

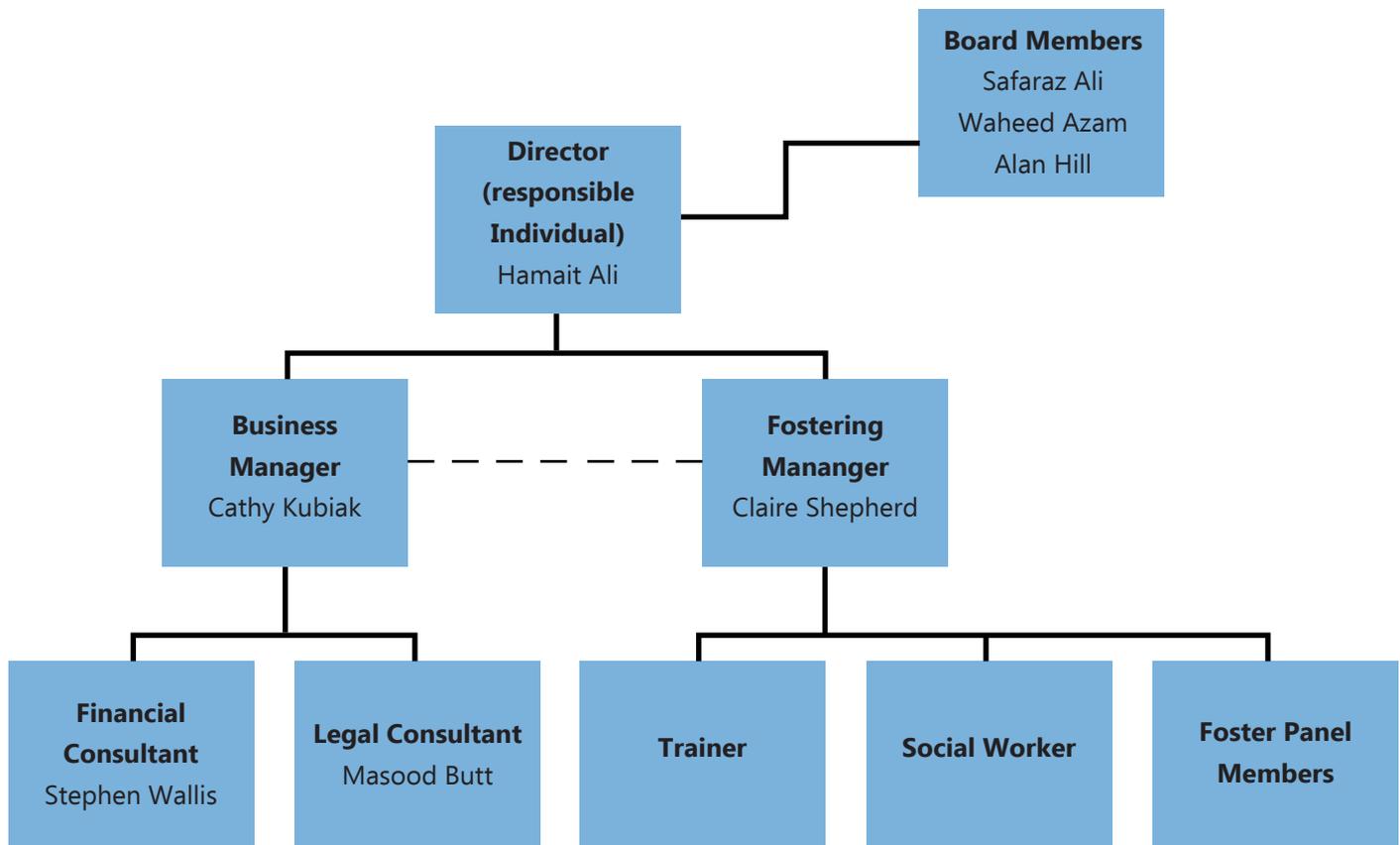
1. To ensure that all children and young people are placed within families that match their racial, cultural and religious background as closely as possible.
2. To utilise our strong connections to attract Foster Families from a diverse range of backgrounds and skill sets to increase the availability of placement opportunities more closely matched to individual needs.
3. To ensure a child's physical and emotional health needs are met and a positive healthy lifestyle is achieved
4. To ensure all the children we look after benefit from educational opportunities
5. To actively promote participation by engaging with children and young people to express their views and opinions and use such feedback to develop services
6. To continually seek external feedback and evaluation to develop and improve our service.
7. To provide support services that ensure the retention of our skilled foster carers
8. Ensure all foster carers have access to support and guidance from a qualified Social Worker
9. To provide opportunities for on-going learning and professional development for the service, our foster carers and employees.
10. To deliver a child-centred approach throughout our practice, having the child or young person's welfare and wishes evident in all our decisions.

# Section 4: Section Status and Constitution

F5 Foster Care is a Limited Independent Organisation registered under the Companies Act 1985. (Company Number 09951911). The Managing Director of F5 Foster Care is Hamait Ali and he is responsible for strategic direction and financial governance of the company. He is also the 'Responsible Individual.' Hamait Ali reports directly to the Board. Claire Shepherd the 'Registered Manager reports directly to Hamait and receives independent professional supervision from a social work qualified supervisor.

F5 FOSTER CARE LTD  
Amington House  
95 Amington Road  
Tyseley  
Birmingham  
B25 8EP

# Section 5: Organisational Chart



The Responsible Individual and Director is Hamait Ali, who has previous experience of managing organisations with health and social care and educational sectors.

The Registered Manager is Claire Shepherd; a qualified social worker registered with the HCPC. The registered manager receives independent professional supervision to ensure continuing quality of practice.

The Business Manager is Cathy Kubiak. Cathy has a wealth of experience in HR and business management.

We will initially utilise freelance Form F assessors and introduce social workers according to the numbers of foster carers we recruit.

# Section 6: Services for Looked After Children

F5 Foster Care provides a service to responsible local authorities who require placements for looked after children across the Midlands. We operate a robust matching process based on good information from the referring authority, sound knowledge of the capabilities of the carers and good professional judgement, in consultation with the child's social worker and the social workers of any children already in placement.

When matching children with carers we will seek to ensure the following, unless any of these are inconsistent with promoting the welfare of the child:

- Siblings are placed together
- Contact with birth family and friends is facilitated
- Children are placed as close to home as possible
- Children are placed with carers that match their racial, cultural, religious and linguistic background as closely as possible
- Children are permanently matched with carers as soon as possible, where this is consistent with their care plan
- Wherever possible there will be a period of introduction before the placement commences
- The views of the child are sought prior to and, on a regular basis, during the placement
- Birth parents are encouraged and supported in playing a positive role, whilst their child is looked after
- The educational and health care needs, including any needs arising from a child's disability are met by the proposed placement

## **Range of placements offered**

F5 Foster Care works in line with all relevant national legislation and regulations relating to the placement of looked after children in foster care. F5 Foster Care is able to provide a wide range of placement options for children and young people aged 0 to 17 years:

### Short term

Where a foster placement is required for a few days / months while plans are made for the child or young person's long-term future. Children and young people may require a short term placement to aid a return home or to assist them in moving to an adoptive or a permanent placement. Foster carers will be working with the placing authority on objectives within the child's Care Plan including working with birth families.

### Long-Term Placements

Where a foster placement is required to provide permanent care for a child or young person up to and into adult independence where adoption is not an option.

### Short Break/Respite Placements

Providing a break for parents and additional support where they may not have appropriate support networks. This can be anything from an overnight stay to a couple of weeks.

### Permanency Placements

F5 Foster Care offers permanent family placements for children and young people for whom the decision that they require a permanent placement has been made. The aim is to provide a home into adulthood and beyond with a sense of belonging within the fostering family. F5 Foster Care promotes Special Guardianship and adoption for children placed with our foster carers where this is in the child's best interests and with agreement of all parties.

### Sibling Placements

Either placed together or separately. Facilitating and supervising contact between siblings. F5 Foster Care prioritises the recruitment and assessment of prospective foster carers who have the emotional strength and physical space to take a sibling group. We recognise the additional support that care of a sibling group requires so that each individual child achieves their maximum potential.

### Children with Disabilities

Due to our connection with Nationwide Care, F5 Foster Care has a particular interest, knowledge and experience of working with disabled children. As a result of this we recruit foster carers with a particular interest of working with disabled children.

### Care Planning and Support in Placement

Care Planning Regulations require that all children should have a placement plan when they are placed or within five days of placement. F5 Foster Care social workers will seek to ensure that this always happens.

We will always work to support reunification with children's birth families and our foster carers are specifically recruited with this in mind.

When children's needs for permanence cannot be met within their families we work to provide a sense of permanence within a carefully matched foster home. In these circumstances we will support our foster carers in becoming Special Guardians where this is in the best interests of the child.

We recognise the difficulties that referring local authorities can face securing diverse foster placements for BME (black and minority ethnic) children and children from diverse cultural and faith groups. F5 Foster Care has strong community connections which will benefit the service in recruiting diverse carers and then supporting children placed to access community resources.

We have high expectations of our foster carers in that they provide a service which takes full ownership of the needs of the child. All F5 Foster Care carers are expected to engage in continuous professional development. This includes issues such as readiness to supervise and support contact, provide transport, to fully support access to education, contributing towards assessments, providing written information to placing social workers and to be fully engaged in the team around the child.

We will provide a service which is transparent and open to scrutiny. This means that we provide easy access to case records to children and young people and foster carers. Any complaints and representations will be dealt with promptly.

As an organisation we recognise that sometimes children are harmed within foster placements. We will remain vigilant and ensure that robust processes are in place that monitor children's welfare within the foster home. Examples of how we will do this include unannounced visits, reviewing Safe Care policies and ensuring supervising social workers develop positive relationships with children in placement.

Where English is not the child's first language and no suitable linguistic match can be identified, both the child and the foster carers will be given access to services and information to enable positive communication.

Although all the children/young people placed with F5 Foster Care carers will have a social worker from their placing authority, the foster carers supervising social worker will also regularly see and talk to the child/young person to ensure they have no concerns about their care.

#### Therapeutic support

All children and young people will be cared for by foster carers who have received training in therapeutic caregiving. At F5 Foster Care we use the Secure Base model.

We believe it's important that our foster carers, and our whole service, cares for and responds to the needs of children in a way that takes into account their previous life experiences. We require all our carers to engage in therapeutic training and the concept is introduced within the Skills to Foster course (introductory training prior to approval).

#### Activities

We will organise activities for our looked after children including young people's groups and joint activities for foster carers and children to enjoy together.

# Section 7: Consultation and User Involvement

We believe that the development of the service we provide must be based on the feedback from our service users (see User Involvement Policy). We take account of all feedback in whatever form, positive or negative, individual or group. We also work pro-actively to seek the views of young people who may not find it easy to feedback. We recognise that some of our young people may have experienced environments where it was not always safe to express their views. We seek feedback in the following ways:

- Individually through family placement social workers talking to young people in placement as part of an ongoing process but also at key times such as prior to foster carer's reviews
- We ask young people to complete questionnaires after they have been with us for one month. We believe it is important to find out their initial feelings and experiences
- We carry out an annual audit for all young people placed with us
- F5 Foster Care organises its own user involvement group bringing together young people to share experiences, contribute to the development of the service and have fun. We intend to build links with the relevant Local Authority Commissioners and will encourage and facilitate our looked after children attending these groups

We recognise that the preferable option for most children is to be with their parents or within their birth families where they are able to meet those children's needs.

# Section 8: Recruitment, Assessment & Approval of Foster Carers

F5 Foster Care recruits prospective foster carers from across the East and West Midlands using a variety of recruitment methods. We work with local authorities to establish the areas where they need foster placements.

F5 Foster Care does not discriminate against any individual wishing to be considered as a foster carer because of their gender, ethnic origin, religion, culture, language, disability, marital status, or sexuality. F5 Foster Care focuses upon welcoming applications from persons with life experience who are completely new to fostering.

## Initial enquiry and initial assessment

Following an initial enquiry, prospective carers are visited by a qualified social worker who will complete a thorough initial assessment. Alongside the assessment of the fostering family the worker will talk about the ethos of the organisation and our expectations of what our foster homes must provide to looked after children.

The outcome of the initial visit is agreed by the Registered Manager and the prospective foster carers will be informed of the decision to proceed to the next stage.

## Skills to Foster Training

If the decision is to proceed and the prospective carers wish to do so they will be invited to attend 'Skills to Foster' training. This is delivered over 3 or 4 days, and provides the basis of, and an introduction to the fostering task. Feedback from the course is used within the Form F assessment process. Prospective foster carers have the opportunity to meet experienced foster carers as well as previously looked after young people who are involved in delivering parts of the training.

## Form F Assessment

All applicants are subject to a full assessment which involves a home study and comprehensive assessment by the assessing social worker. The assessment uses the competency-based approach and the BAAF Form F as the primary foster carer assessment tool. The process will include a detailed assessment of the applicants' background including their childhood, their educational experiences, their own life experiences, their upbringing, their own parenting experiences, their values and attitudes to diversity and any specific skills they may have e.g. working with disabilities and working with adolescents. This is to ensure that applicants are clear about the fostering task and the assessing social worker has obtained evidence that they have the competencies to foster. Statutory checks, such as, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), medicals, Local Authority checks and references will be obtained.

To process an application to approve a foster carer/s takes between 6-8 visits and is generally completed in 4-6 months.

## Panel

All applications are presented to the Fostering Panel which is made up of a number of people from a variety of professional backgrounds. The Fostering Panel plays a major part in the Quality Assurance process. All prospective foster carers are expected to attend our Fostering Panel with their Assessing Social Worker.

The Fostering Panel considers all applications for approval and makes recommendations as to the applicants' suitability as a foster carer, and if so, the terms on which they should be approved i.e. the age range and number of children they can foster at any one time.

The Fostering Panel has a number of other tasks and responsibilities. These include reviews of approval of foster carers, recommendations on de-registration of foster carers and to act as part of the appeal process on complaints against the Agency or any of its representatives.

Following a recommendation from the Fostering Panel the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) will review all of the information linked to the recommendation before reaching a final decision.

## Carer Annual Reviews

Once a foster carer has been approved, they are reviewed on an annual basis or following any significant change of circumstances to allow F5 Foster Care to properly satisfy itself about foster carers suitability to continue fostering. F5 Foster Care will ensure that reviews of the foster carers' approval is undertaken on an annual basis in line with statutory requirements or could be held more frequently where in our opinion it is deemed necessary to do so. The intention of such reviews will be to continually improve the services offered by the organisation and to ensure that all carers receive the support and training that is required to allow ongoing improvement in standards of service. As part of the review process F5 Foster Care will consult with Placing Authorities with children and young people in placement and children who foster in order to gain relevant feedback and information in regard to placements.

Foster carers and applicants to foster are entitled to make representations, in writing or in person, to the F5 Foster Care Fostering Panel in relation to their approval as foster carers in instances where the Agency Decision Maker makes a 'qualifying determination' in relation to one of the following areas:

- The agency proposes not to approve the applicants as foster carers;
- The agency proposes to change the foster carer's terms of approval;
- The agency proposes to terminate the foster carer's approval

## Policies and Procedures

All foster carers receive a comprehensive foster carers' handbook which provides guidance and support to carers about the agencies policy and procedures and their role and responsibilities which is updated regularly and is a point of reference for foster carers and staff.

# Section 9: Support for Foster Carers

All foster carers receive supervision from a qualified, experienced social worker. The supervising relationship is crucial to maximising the success of the foster placement, therefore once a worker has been allocated to a foster family this doesn't change unless absolutely necessary.

## Training

Prior to approval all prospective foster carers attend 'Skills to Foster' training delivered over 3 or 4 days; this provides the basis of, and an introduction to, the fostering task. Feedback from the course is used within the Form F assessment process.

F5 Foster Care believes that ongoing training is a basis to achieving an outstanding service. Mandatory training courses include Safeguarding, Safer Caring, Diversity, Health and Safety, Attachment, Management of Challenging Behaviour, Allegations, e-safety and Paediatric First Aid.

## Foster Carer Support Groups

F5 Foster Care holds regular support groups. We aim to ensure that foster carers attend due to finding them helpful. The purpose of the group is to allow carers to share experiences in a safe environment, learn from colleagues, develop skills and increase their knowledge. We encourage carers to take a lead in the development of these support groups. The support groups also provide an opportunity for feedback to the Registered Manager.

## Out of Hours support 24 hours a day, seven days a week

F5 Foster Care believe that when foster carers know they have 24/7 support they feel more confident. The size and structure of the organisation means that the 'on call' worker will have knowledge of the foster home and the children/young people in placement. Our commitment to the carers is that if they need a worker to attend - whatever the time - we will be there.

## Independent Support

F5 Foster Care provides all foster carers with membership with Foster Talk, which allows foster carers access to independent advice, including legal advice. In circumstances where foster carers have been subject to an allegation, F5 Foster Care will fund independent support for them.

## Support Groups for Foster Carer's Birth Children

F5 Foster Care will organise support groups for the birth children of foster carers and engage in direct work with those children as necessary. This support work helps foster carer's children to understand and feel engaged with the fostering task, as well as providing direct support if problems develop.

## F5 Foster Care Online Information Resource

This provides specific information for approved foster carers on matters such as forthcoming events and training as well as policies and procedures.

### Activities and Events

F5 Foster Care organises events and activities for fostering families and looked after children together. This provides a chance to meet other carers and workers in a more informal environment, have fun and enhance their relationship.

### Specialist Therapeutic Support

As described above under the Support For Children section, F5 puts a great emphasis on carers developing a therapeutic style of foster care. The Secure Base model has been proven to make foster carers feel more confident in how they respond to the needs of looked after children.

### Respite and Breaks for Foster Carers

F5 Foster Care Believes that respite care is an important element in placement support and as such is committed to providing foster carers with respite care appropriate to the needs of the children in placement.

### Consultation with Foster Carers

In accordance with our founding values we believe that the views of foster carers should contribute to the development of the service. We therefore use a variety of methods, both formal and informal, to hear what foster carers think.

- We hold regular support groups
- We ask foster carers to complete questionnaires
- We ask foster carers to contribute toward staff appraisal
- We encourage foster carers to talk to the Registered Manager
- We hold quarterly Responsible Individual surgeries where foster carers can talk to the RI as a group but also in private if they so wish
- We have an easy to use compliments and complaints process

# Section 10: Quality Assurance

## Representations and complaints procedure

All children and young people placed with our foster carers are informed of the Representations and Complaints Procedures straightaway through the Children's Guide to F5 Foster Care, which is explained to them by their foster carers. Leaflets about the complaints process is also available which are designed to offer clear information to the wide age range of children and young people placed with us. All foster carers, staff and placing local authorities are provided with information about the F5 Foster Care Complaints Procedure through the Foster Carer Handbook, placement documentation and induction. This includes reference to the right of any service user (or anyone acting on their behalf) to make any complaint to the statutory regulator (Ofsted) or appropriate local authority.

## Complaints and Compliments

F5 Foster Care Complaints Procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level, i.e. Stage 1 - Informal Stage. A record will also be maintained by the Registered manager of all compliments and complaints received from service users/local authorities. In the event that a complaint is received, we will use the lessons learned to inform service improvement.

## External Inspection

As a registered children's social care service, F5 Foster Care is subject to regular external inspection by Ofsted. F5 Foster Care welcomes such inspection and is proud of the outcomes. The reports of these inspections will be publicly available via the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Ofsted may be contacted at:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231

## Service improvement

We promote a culture of continuous improvement, giving careful attention to feedback about our services provided by any individuals or organisations.

# Section 11: Contact Details

We hope that the information in this Statement of Purpose has been helpful. For further information on the work of F5 Foster Care please contact us at:

F5 Foster Care Ltd  
Amington House  
95 Amington Road  
Tyseley  
Birmingham  
B25 8EP  
Email: [enquiries@f5fostercare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@f5fostercare.co.uk)  
T. 0121 271 0555

## **Other useful contacts:**

Ofsted  
Ofsted ARC  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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M1 2WD  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
T. 0300 123 1231

Fostering Network  
87 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8HA  
Tel: 020-7620-6400  
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E-mail: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net)  
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