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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)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

This Statement of Purpose has been 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 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 Limited 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:

- **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, nurturing environment in which to thrive.

F5 Foster Care's objectives are:

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



#### **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 Executive Board. The 'Registered Manager', Emma Turnham (status pending Fit Person Interview) reports directly to Hamait and receives independent professional supervision from a social work qualified supervisor. Emma is a newly appointed Registered Manager with substantial experience in Social Work, fostering, implementation science and therapeutic interventions. The Business Manager is Cathy Kubiak. Cathy has a wealth of experience in HR and business management.

The service currently employs one part time Supervising Social Worker that offers supervision to three approved fostering households. The Supervising Social Worker also undertakes a rolling programme of Form F Assessments.

There is one Senior Administrator that provides full administrative support to the service in addition to completing the Panel Administration and coordinating all of the Stage 1 assessment checks.

The agency continues to utilise the services of Independent Social Workers to complete additional Form F assessments however aspires to employ an additional part time Supervising Social Worker pending the successful approval of any further foster families.

An additional Administration Assistant will be employed in order to provide support to the Senior Administrator.

Presently, F5 Foster Care has three fully approved fostering households. Two households are occupied by children and young people who are placed long term. One family is temporarily on hold. At the time of review, there are no vacancies.

We actively recruit Foster Carer Applicants across the Midlands paying particular attention to reaching individuals and families that are new to Fostering. We aim to have approved 10 new Fostering Households within 2020.

From January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020, the service has received 8 formal enquiries. Of these enquiries, 4 have resulted in a formal invitation to apply to foster for F5 Foster Care. Of these 4 invites, two have converted to formal assessments and are currently in Stage 1. The agency also has one assessment temporarily on hold pending receipt of statutory documentation.

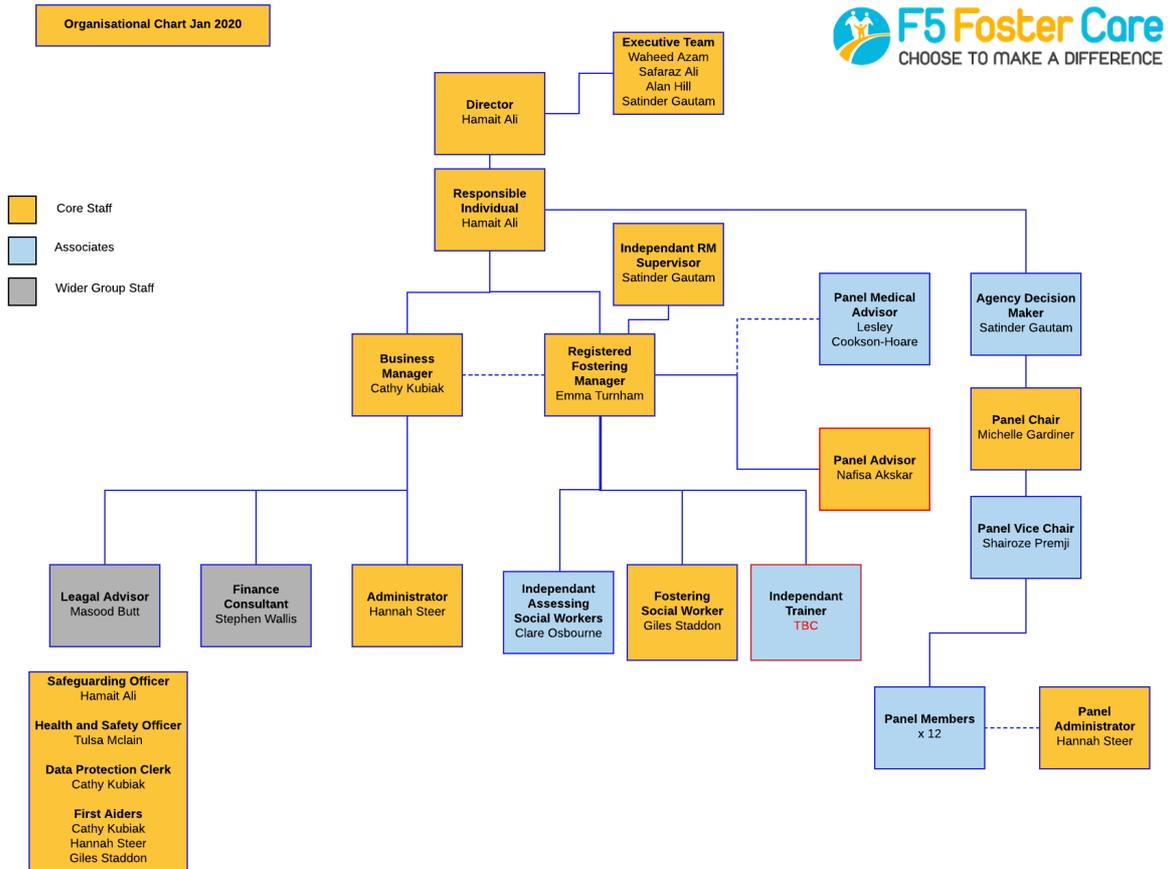
It is the aim of F5 Foster Care to have increased its fostering households to approximately 10 families within the next 12 months.

Name and Address of Agency:

F5 FOSTER CARE LTD  
Amington House  
95 Amington Road Tyseley  
Birmingham B25 8EP 0121 271 0555



### Section 5: Organisational Chart





## **Section 6: Services for Looked After Children**

F5 Foster Care provides a service to 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

Although we endeavour to match as closely as possible, we acknowledge that there could be identified gaps or potential areas of need that are not fully met by the carer's skill set or family circumstances. In these situations, our Matching Matrix will ensure that all minor discrepancies are identified and plans are put in place as early as possible, to provide support and training to maximise the success of the placement going forwards.

### **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 aims to provide a wide range of placement options for children and young people aged 0 to 18 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.

#### Staying Put

F5 believe that all young people should have the option of staying with their Foster Carers post 18 to ensure that when they are able to achieve independence they can be prepared and make the transition well. F5 will actively encourage Foster Carers to consider this option for the young people.

#### 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 Supervising Social Workers will ensure that this always happens. For all placements made with F5 Foster Care, both the foster carer and the child or young person will be fully included in the placement planning process, with the child's wishes and feelings held in complete consideration throughout.

We will always work to support reunification with children's birth families and our foster carers are specifically recruited to work closely with Birth Families in accordance with the Care Plan.

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 BAME (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

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 considers their previous life experiences. We will require all our carers to engage in attachment based training; the concept of which is introduced within the Skills to Foster course (introductory training prior to approval).

We will also support children, young people and their carer to access to CAMHS, TESS or other specific support service as per their assessed needs and work closely with any recommendations and support plans that are made.

#### 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.

F5 understands that children's emotional, social, creative and physical skills develop through a range of accessible and stimulating environments. As a result, all our staff and foster carers will be committed to ensuring that children in their care encouraged and supported to access a range of varied activities both within school and in addition to it.

As well as providing our own range of activities for children involved with our service, we will also work closely with placing local authorities to ensure that carers, children and young



people are able to maximise the use of local facilities that are available to them through Foster Talk.

### **Section 7: Consultation and Support for Children and Young People**

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 and are keen to ensure that these individuals are supported to express their views. We will endeavour to do this in the following ways:

- Individually through Supervising 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, their own review meetings or their own education meetings.
- F5 Foster Care is developing its own young people's 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 the relevant Children in Care Council groups.
- All of the children looked after by our carers are aware that they can contact us, their social worker, their Independent Reviewing Officer or any other professionals at any point, and they can do this confidentially.
- F5 Foster Care is developing its own interactive application that children and young people can use to provide us direct feedback on their wishes and feelings.
- Children and young people will be invited to complete face to face contact, questionnaires, online surveys, attend consultation events and activities.
- Children will be provided with a comprehensive Children's Guide, that provides them with contact details of the core support services available to them.

#### **Wishes and Feelings, Participation and Consultation**

Based upon the child's age and understanding, their views, wishes and feelings will be sought prior to and throughout the time they are looked after by the service to ensure placements remain relevant to meeting their individual needs.

In cases where there is a planned move into one of our families, a pre-placement meeting will be held, where there will be an opportunity for the child (and their parents where appropriate) to contribute to the placement plan, expressing any of their own preferences. These will be given full consideration when developing plans for a child's day to day care, which will be incorporated into new routines within foster home. These plans will be reviewed at least annually.

Children will be included with Placement Planning meetings within 5 days of the placement in emergency situations. Foster Carers will speak to the child on arrival about their care preferences until a formal meeting takes place.



Foster carers will continue to actively seek and review the wishes and feelings of the child in respect of important issues such as peer relations, contact, placement issues (diet, dress, routines, rules and expectations), school, hobbies and interests.

Evidence must be provided of how they have acted upon any of the expressed preferences where safe and appropriate (through supervision visits, safe care plans and risk assessments).

The foster carers will keep detailed records of a child's expressed views to inform further care planning and decision making around the child.

On alternate visits the Supervising Social Worker will see the child alone to ensure the child's wellbeing and ascertain their views. The Supervising Social Worker will also proactively support the child with contributing to their foster carer's Annual Foster Home Review and any other arising forums.

This will be recorded clearly on the child's file in addition to records of supervisory home visits.

Foster carers will be responsible for ensuring that children are supported and encouraged to contribute to Children Looked After Reviews and any other decision-making forums in respect of their care planning.

All efforts will be made to ensure that children can communicate in any medium that best suits their level of need. It will also be paramount to ensure that children whose first language is not English, or those with additional needs can communicate their wishes and feelings effectively and services will be enlisted to ensure that this is possible.

#### Children's representation, complaints, rights and advocacy

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights are central to working with children and F5 Foster Care fully adhere to these core principles in relation to the protection of children's rights.

Should children wish to make a complaint about the service or levels of care that they have received, they have the right to complain and to have that complaint listened to and reviewed fully as per the complaint's procedure detailed below.

F5 will ensure that both they and their Social Worker are aware of how they can make a complaint or representation. This will also be documented in the Children's Guide which will be provided to prior to or immediately on placement with their new family.

If a child requires support to make a complaint, they will be entitled to receive this from whomever they choose; a parent, social worker, independent visitor, Independent Reviewing Officer or foster carer.

An advocate can also be sourced should this be necessary.

The child will have access to their Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer with or without permission of the foster carer. Foster carers ensure that these details available to the child should they be needed.



### Identity and Diversity, Respect and Individuality

Every child looked after by F5 Foster Care will be cared for in a way that fully respects, recognises and celebrates their identity. Everyone within the agency is responsible for providing support and opportunities to maximise the child's individual potential.

Full attention will be paid to the child's gender, faith, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation and any ability or disability.

Foster carers will be fully assessed for their ability to recognise the importance of positively upholding a child's identity and individuality.

Regular supervision visits and training will be provided to carers and to staff.

External professional advice and support can also be sought where this is necessary.

Children will be encouraged and enabled to exercise choice and independence in clothes, personal items, food and other such important day to day decisions, provided it is within the limits that a reasonable parent would set in order to keep the child safe and healthy.

Carers and staff will be trained and supported to recognise potential signs that a child or young person might be experiencing discrimination by virtue of their defining features or characteristics.

Carers and staff will be trained to recognise any potential prejudices a child in their care might present. Each situation will be addressed individually, and carers will be supported to effectively teach the children in their care about diversity.

Carers and staff will be trained in how to sensitively challenge marginalisation and how to ensure that all aspects of a child's individuality are upheld.

Carers, staff and young people will be made familiar with the content of the F5 Equality and Diversity Policy and the Responding to Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy.

The importance of contact and Life Story Work is fully recognised for their role in developing a child's positive sense of identity and individuality. F5 staff and carers will work closely with placing Local Authorities, children and young people to ensure that these needs are met.

### Support for Children

The agency aims to ensure that children looked after by our service receive the highest standards of foster care to enable them to achieve to their full potential. There is clear guidance on the standards expected from all our foster carers, and their ability to meet these standards is assessed carefully pre-approval in addition to being reviewed regularly through supervisory visits. There is also clear guidance on the standards outlined in the Foster Carer Handbook and the agency policies and procedures, to which all of our carers have access. Children will also receive a copy of the Children's Guide at the time of placement and will be given updated copies as appropriate. All children are supported to



understand the contents of their guide by their social worker, foster carers and the fostering supervising social worker. Children are also made fully aware of the standards and services that they should expect to receive and are asked to comment on whether these are being met, through regular visits, the annual review process and consultation sessions.

Other Services available to support children include:

- Trained and supported foster carers committed to promoting relationship stability and child focussed care
- A secure, safe, and consistent environment with carers who are well matched to their identified needs
- A service that contributes to and support their care planning
- A service that seeks and accounts for their needs, wishes and feelings
- Regular inclusion in supervising social worker visits
- Support to contribute to all of the decision-making forums around their care, including Children Looked After Reviews, Personal Education Plan meetings, placement planning
- Continued life story work, supported by Local Authority Social Worker
- Joined up working with foster carers, Supervising Social worker and Local Authority Social Worker
- Assessment of independence skills and support to progress towards adulthood and independence
- Regular savings and pocket money as well as support to understand budgeting and handling money
- Social events for children looked after and children who foster (foster carer's birth children), including festival celebrations
- Celebration of success events for children looked after
- Access to a regular newsletter about the fostering service and any relevant current events
- Opportunity to learn about and develop hobbies, sports and leisure interests

#### Physical Environment



Each foster carer assessment will ensure that our foster carers can provide all children and adults in their home with a clean and hygienic, safe and stimulating environment. This includes a regularly updated Health and Safety Assessment of each household. Applicants and carers are required to present their home insurance and up to date service and maintenance documentation for their utilities. Checks are also carried out on vehicles used to transport children; MOT's, driving licenses and Insurance will need to be current and not indicate any safety concerns.

To ensure a child's privacy and dignity, where possible, every young person will have their own bedroom. Regularly reviewed Safe Care Plans will and risk assessments will be completed to address and manage any concerns within each foster home. In eventualities where same sex sibling groups are approved for a bedroom share, there will need to be full risk assessment undertaken by the child's Social Worker and approval of the decision provided in writing. This assessment will be regularly reviewed. In this eventuality, young people will have their own bed and designated area of the bedroom where they can keep their own belongings and valuables safely.

Children who are Looked After need the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging in and ownership of their home and family environment, therefore, carers will be encouraged to ensure children are consulted and given choice on various elements of the living space where appropriate.

The physical environment will be smoke free. The assessment will discuss the smoking habits of all applicants, carers and regular visitors to the home will be risk assessed using the Protecting Children from the Effects of Passive Smoking document. policy will be outlined as early in the process as possible. This includes the use of electronic vaporisers and electronic cigarettes.

Although animals and pets can be a great source of comfort for many individuals, they can also be a source of danger, through their behaviour or poor hygiene and care arrangements. A full pet assessment will be carried out by the assessing Social Worker on each individual pet within the property, including where the animal sleeps, toilets and is allowed access to within the home. An additional veterinarian assessment might be sought based upon the findings. The Supervising Social Worker will ensure that robust management plans are in place to promote the wellbeing of both the child and the animal.

There will be at least yearly unannounced visits to ensure that conditions remain compliant with the minimum standards of care.

#### Healthy Living and Healthy Outcomes

It is a priority for the agency that each child's physical and emotional health is promoted, and they can freely access the correct services to meet all of their health needs.

All our carers are required to register each child with a GP, a Dentist and an Optician immediately (if these provisions are not already in place locally). For the duration of the



placement, carers will be clear on their responsibilities and recording around ensuring these routine appointments are upheld.

Foster Carer paediatric first aid training is provided as standard (specialist training for any other additional complex health needs can also be sourced).

Placement planning will ensure carers are fully aware of each child's health needs and their delegated responsibilities in respect of specific medical treatment.

Approved carers are required to model and encourage a healthy lifestyle to the children in their care.

Carers and children will be encouraged to:

- Eat a healthy and varied diet (any specific dietary requirements will be discussed accounted for at the placement planning stage)
- Participate in regular physical exercise
- Ensure that children have access to services such as sexual health and relationship advice
- Develop healthy attitudes towards being drug, smoke and alcohol free
- Provide consent to their own health treatments where appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding

#### Positive behaviour and taking risks

Making choices and learning from mistakes is a critical part of life and it is essential that children have the opportunity to grow, explore and interact with the world around them as far as possible. All children will be encouraged and supported to make friends, join in sports and outdoor activities and participate in a fulfilling lifestyle.

Foster carers will be supported by their Supervising Social Worker to make informed judgements to allow children or young people to undertake certain activities. Foster carers will also be supported to help children understand a variety of risky situations and promote more positive options for healthy and pro-social behaviour, including learning from any mistakes or misjudgements.

#### Education

As far as reasonably practicable, placement matching with our carers will endeavour to minimise any disruption to the child's education or training provision.

All staff and foster carers will receive training and support around the processes within the education system to enable them to become the best advocates on behalf of the children in their care.

Carers and staff are expected to seek the child's views about school, including the child's aspirations and goals and keep these at the fore when representing the child within the school environment.



Each child's education will be prioritised, including ensuring school attendance, providing time to complete homework, maintaining good communication and attending parent school conferences.

Every child in our care will have a current Personal Educational Plan. Attendance at these meetings is given priority by both the carers and their Supervising Social Worker.

Priority will be given to education in all circumstances. Holidays within the school times will not be authorised and a close record will be kept on school attendance, attainment and progress.

For any child who is not in formal education, employment or training, support and advice can be provided by the associated Pathway Group where appropriate.

Case by case Pathway Planning will take place for children and young people who are Staying Put and potentially making the transition to higher and further education.

### Allegations

Any allegation made by a child will be taken seriously and investigated.

Where the complaint made is of a child protection nature, the information will immediately be passed to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the responsible authority and Ofsted.

A comprehensive record of all allegations will be documented on the child's file, including the resolution, any action taken, and the decisions reached.

Support will be available to the subject of the allegation (where the allegation concerns a carer or staff member) through the agency subscription to Foster Talk.

The service has a full policy on Managing Allegations or Concerns, in addition to the mandatory Managing Allegations training.

### Bullying

It is the ethos of the whole service that all forms of bullying is unacceptable.

Carers will be trained and supported to recognise, challenge and manage any instances of bullying; whether the child in their care is the subject of or is carrying out the bullying.

All staff and foster carers will all be familiar with the agency Responding to and Prevention of Bullying Policy and will conduct themselves in accordance with its principles and recommendations to ensure that the children in our care can thrive in an environment free from harm of all types.

### Safeguarding Procedures

We always take our safeguarding obligations extremely seriously and aim to protect the welfare of all children within our service.



All of our staff and carers are familiar with the requirements outlined within our policies and procedures documentation with respect to safeguarding and safe care. Additionally, all staff and carers will be regularly trained in how to uphold the safety care and well-being of all children and young people.

Carers and staff are supported to recognise any potential signs that might indicate the child is at risk of harm. There will also be a robust safe care planning process and risk assessment process which covers known and preventable risks, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing from Home and potential radicalisation of gang affiliation risk assessment plans.

Support and training will also be available for carers and young people to enable them to recognise risks and operate safely on social media and other online platforms.

The agency also adheres to stringent safer recruitment policy, where any staff, volunteers and carers are all subject to intensive checks and references.

#### Behaviour Support

Foster carers will receive training, both during the assessment and post approval to help them understand and respond accordingly to an array of potentially challenging behaviours.

As a result of early abuse or trauma, children might express a variety of presenting needs and our carers. Through training and through supervising social worker support, carers will be able to understand how early adversity presents itself in externalised behaviour challenges.

Supervising social worker visits will ensure that carers are well supported through the emotional demands of managing a child with complex behaviour.

Individualised Safe Care Plans will set out suitable limits, boundaries and consequences for potential negative behaviour. All potential sanctions will be age appropriate and reflective of the child's ability and understanding.

Carers will be trained in diffusing or de-escalating potentially inflammatory situations.

The use of restraint is strongly advised against unless there is a clear and immediate risk to the child or other individual.

Physical chastisement in any form will not be used by foster carers or anyone else within their home.

#### Promoting Independence and the Transition to Adulthood

Throughout their placement, children will be supported (at various age appropriate stages) to understand social and sexual relationships, develop self-esteem and emotional resilience, access education or employment and develop practical skills such as, self-care, shopping, keeping and preparing food, managing money, accessing financial support, care services and



many more. Carers and supervising social workers will work alongside the child to empower them to develop these competencies.

Should the child remain with the current carers beyond 16 years of age, consideration will be given to “Staying Put” arrangements. Foster carers and supervising social workers will be fully included in all Pathway Planning processes affecting the young person.

#### Contact and Relationships with Family and Friends

Foster carers will be supported with understanding their responsibilities and requirements with respect to facilitating positive contact in line with expectations designated in the child’s Care Plan.

Foster carers and agency staff will support and encourage children to maintain contact with birth parents, wider family, friends and others who are important to them (provided that contact remains practicable and consistent with the child’s welfare).

Foster carers and agency staff will ensure that Life Story Work continues to be progressed.

Carers will be trained and supported to uphold their obligation to, keep accurate records of the child’s time in their care, in addition to collecting memorabilia, mementos and photographs as a reflection of the child’s journey in their family. This memory work is to be given to the child at any point they move on.

#### **Section 8: Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers**

F5 Foster Care recruit 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 Foster Carer because of their gender, ethnic origin, religion, culture, language, disability, marital status, or sexuality. We assess other health and lifestyle issues on an individual basis. 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 too 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. Active assessments will take place in two stages. At the point of progression to assessment, the Registered Manager will confirm whether these stages can take place concurrently, or whether stage 1 checks will be required before a progression to stage 2 can commence.

Stage 1 of the assessment includes the collation of all of the statutory checks, including DBS, local authority, medicals, ex-partner reference, 3 personal referees, employer references and



references from any previous fostering agencies where appropriate, financial assessment, education checks (for applications with children of school age), landlord or letting agent, health and safety checks, overseas checks and any other additional checks required in relation to the specific applicants (such as Ministry of Defence). Once these are complied, stage 2 will progress.

Stage 2 of the assessment is conducted by allocating the applicant to an assessing social worker. The assessing Social Worker will be expected to schedule and complete around 8 visits, to produce a report that covers individual profiles, past and present relationships, support networks, interviews with child and adult members of the household, lifestyle, parenting capacity and experience and valuing diversity. The assessor will be able to make recommendations based upon this assessment regarding the carer's fitness for and terms of approval such as age range, placement type and specialist skills or abilities.

#### Skills To Foster Training

F5 Foster Care subscribe to and will utilise The Fostering Network Skills to Foster preparation training. This is a verified and well sourced training course that offers a foundation in the role of the carer, basic safeguarding in addition to an understanding of the National Minimum Standards for foster care. Feedback from the course is used within the assessment process. The preparation training will be delivered in conjunction with experienced Foster Carers and Care Experienced individuals.

#### Additional Support

All our Foster Carers are provided with full membership to Foster Talk from the beginning of Stage 2 of the Assessment Process onwards. This awards our Carers access to a range of helplines for medical and emotional support, (post approval this will also include legal advice). Along with a variety of other benefits including discounts in a range of outlets. We also offer a Fostering Buddy system whereby our Carers can speak with experienced Foster Carers.

#### Prospective Foster Carer Report

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 utilising the Coram BAAF Prospective Foster Carer Report as the primary foster carer assessment tool. As per stage 2 above, the process will include a detailed assessment of all aspects of the applicants current and previous lifestyle, attitudes and experiences.

The assessment process is generally completed in 3-6 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.

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

#### 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 that foster carers are still suitable to continue fostering. F5 Foster Care will ensure that reviews of the foster carers' approval are undertaken on an annual basis in line with statutory requirements or may 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 to gain relevant feedback and information in regard to placements.

#### Matching and Making Placements

Matching children and young people to the most suitable fostering household is critical to ensuring children develop to their full potential. It is also important to the motivation, enjoyment and retention of our foster carers.

Together, the agency and the placing Local Authority will ensure that a match is made that adequately considers:

- Safeguarding and meeting any safe care concerns
- Personal History of the child
- Personal history of the potential carers
- Identity, ethnicity, culture and religion
- Health, well-being and disability



- The child and carer's education, training and employment status
- Behaviours and risk management
- The child's interests and aspirations
- Locality in respect of education, contact and potential risks posed by birth family or other individuals
- Overall aims and objectives of the placement

Matching will also consider the carer's:

- Terms of approval
- Availability
- Specialisms, knowledge, skills and training
- Ability to transport
- Experience with managing birth families
- Other children looked after within the placement
- Own children, household members and pets

Should a child be placed with carers from a different ethnicity or culture to their own, or a child is placed with specific health needs, the agency will source additional specialist training where necessary and appropriate, ensuring that the carer is fully competent in meeting the child's physical and emotional health needs.

The CoramBAAF Form F assessment, the Carer Profile, the matching considerations document and the competencies matrix will be used to guide the matching process.

For each placement made, the Matching Matrix will be used to evidence how the carers can meet the specific needs of each child, including a support plan for areas where there are gaps in the matching process.

#### 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 Supervising 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 necessary. Supervisory visits will take place at least monthly.

#### Training



In addition to the training provided prior to approval all approved foster carers will be expected to attend ongoing mandatory and preferred training in order to advance their skills and understanding of their caring role.

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. We have a comprehensive Training Plan for Foster Carers which influences their annual Personal Development Plan and their Annual Review.

All newly approved foster carers will also be required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards workbook within the first 12 months after their approval.

F5 Foster Care subscribes to The Foster Care Training Hub which provides the opportunity for carers to access a range of online courses to advance their day to day knowledge and understanding. Carers and their supervising social worker keep an ongoing training and development portfolio demonstrating how the carers are developing the skills required of them by the fostering agency.

#### Foster Carer Support Groups

F5 Foster Care will hold regular support groups when we have more carers. The purpose of these groups will be to allow carers to share experiences in a safe environment, learn from colleagues, develop skills and increase their knowledge. Carers will be encouraged to actively decide the agenda and format of these sessions. The support groups will provide an opportunity for feedback to the Registered Manager.

#### Out of Hours support.

F5 Foster Care believe that when foster carers know they have available support out of hours they feel more confident. When a Child is placed with an F5 foster Carer we provide a list of emergency numbers and who to contact in an emergency. Currently our carers have access to support from 6am until 10pm 7 days per week, if emergencies occur outside of these hours Foster Carers must consult the placing Authorities Emergency Duty Team service. F5 Foster Care are committed to providing a high level of support to our Foster Carers. We are exploring different methods of providing out of hours support during our first years as an agency. The provision of our Out of Hours service will be continuously reviewed as we develop.

#### Independent Support

F5 Foster Care provides all foster carers with membership with Foster Talk both pre and post approval, 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. We also provide experienced Foster Carers who act as “buddies” for Foster Carers both pre and post approval.

#### 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.

#### Activities and Events

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

#### 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. F5 Foster Care are committed to helping children and young people feel part of their carer's family and extended support network. It is for this reason, where possible we will formally assess back-up carers from within the carer's own network that can provide support and care for the child when required. This will prevent disruption and maintain the child's connectedness to their foster family.

#### 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

#### Finance

F5 carers will receive a weekly fostering fee paid directly into their bank account. The level of the fee is reflective of the complexity of the placement and levels of training and proficiency expected from our carers.

In addition, all carers will receive a maintenance allowance. This will include pocket money and savings for each child, holiday allowance, birthday allowance, festival allowance, and clothing allowance.

Foster carers will be provided with detailed information regarding their fees and allowances. Guidance will be provided on the amounts allocated to each specified area of provision for the child.

Carers will also be provided with an annual statement summarising their receipt of payments for the previous year.

The agency finances are subject to annual financial audit and supporting financial references will be provided to Ofsted as required.



### Insurance

The agency has a comprehensive insurance package in place which fully covers all agency activities. The cover includes Personal and Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity and satisfies the insurance requirements for all fostering framework contracts awarded to the agency.

All our foster carers will be given advice and guidance on how to ensure that their own household and other insurances, such as car and holiday cover meet their fostering needs.

## **Section 10: Quality Assurance**

### Representations and Complaints

All children, young people and foster carers are informed of the Complaints Procedures through the Children's/Young Persons Guide to F5 Foster Care, which is explained to them by their foster carers. Leaflets about the complaints process are 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, Foster Carer Complaints booklet 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.

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. If 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 feedback. 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  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### Service Review

We promote a culture of continuous improvement, giving careful attention to feedback about our services provided by any individuals or organisations. We will review service activity at least annually to consolidate learning from practice issues. Fostering Panel will also complete an annual review that summarises Panel activity. The Statement of purpose



will also be re reviewed and updated at least annually to reflect changes in the service's levels of provision.

#### Training, Supervision and Appraisals

F5 Foster Care are committed to the investment and development of its staff and its contractors. At least monthly supervision is provided to all of our staff and an annual appraisal will be provided that outlines individual progress and outstanding training and development needs. Training is available for all of our staff and there is a commitment to ensuring the most appropriate support is sourced for all of the professionals involved with the service. Our staff have full access to The Foster Carer Training Hub, CoramBAAF and The Fostering Network training courses. F5 Foster Care also fully support the training, supervision and appraisal process for our Independent Social Workers and Panel Members. Training logs are collated for all of our staff and contractors in order to inform their continuous professional development.

#### Progress Reporting and Progress Tracking

Progress reports for the children in pace will be completed regularly in order to track and monitor outcomes. Foster carers will complete progress reporting on a monthly basis. The Supervising Social Worker will complete progress tracking on a quarterly basis. The outcomes from these reports will be used to develop service provision for individual children and target more specific services to meet areas of need. These reports will also inform Foster Carer Annual Reviews, Children's Looked After Reviews and Pathway Planning.

#### File Audit

The files and records held by F5 Foster Care will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that we are holding complete records and information for a children, young people, staff and carers. Checks will ensure that F5 Foster Care are fully compliant with GDPR guidance.

#### Safer Recruitment

The service operates a clear safer recruitment policy that ensures that staff, volunteers, carers and contractors are suitable to work within the children's workforce. Full compliance checks, references and records are stored and can be evidenced as required.

#### Professional Memberships

##### *CoramBAAF*

F5 Foster Care has corporate Membership to CoramBAAF.

CoramBAAF is an agency that promotes the highest standards of child-centred policies and procedures as well as access to an array of research, development and training opportunities. CoramBAAF supports professionals and foster carers in the delivery of a quality assured, research informed and legislatively compliant service to children and young people who are looked after.

##### *The Fostering Network*

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading Fostering Charity, responsible for supporting the work of fostering the community nationally, in order to develop and share best practice. The



Fostering Network seek to influence fostering policy and practice at every level, whilst raising the profile of the importance of fostering.

F5 Foster Care subscribes to the corporate support services available through this membership, including access for its staff to training, legislation, policy development and documentation.

#### *Foster Talk*

FosterTalk's sole aim is to provide high quality independent guidance to foster families across the UK. It is a service that provides impartial advice and offers a comprehensive package of resources and support for foster carers who need help.

F5 Foster Care subscribes to this service for all of its Stage 1 applicants, approved foster carers and staff.

### **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  
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Birmingham  
B25 8EP  
Email: [Team@f5fostercare.co.uk](mailto:Team@f5fostercare.co.uk)  
T. 0121 271 0555

#### **Other useful contacts:**

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

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