



## Statement of Purpose

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024

**URN:** 1277076

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## Section 1

### **Introduction**

F5 Foster Care was established in 2018, it is a Private Limited Company registered under the Companies Act 1985. (Company Number 09951911). The Statement of Purpose is reviewed and agreed annually by the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual. F5 Foster Care is registered and inspected as an Independent Fostering Agency by Ofsted URN: 1277076. F5 Foster Care has a comprehensive insurance package in place which fully covers, Personal and Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity and satisfies the insurance requirements for all fostering framework contracts awarded to F5 Foster Care.

F5 Foster Care is a small, family orientated fostering service with a commitment to providing personalised, high quality, practical and emotional support. F5 Foster Care recognises the complexities involved in fostering and fully acknowledges the invaluable role foster carers play in caring for children and young people. We provide services to children, young people and foster carers across the West and East Midlands areas, we offer a range of placements for children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years. As of the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, F5 Foster Care have 8 children and 5 fostering households.

Our Statement of Purpose provides information about F5 Foster Care, including the services and facilities offered by the Agency. It is available on F5 Foster Care's Website ([F5FosterCare.co.uk](http://F5FosterCare.co.uk)) or in hard copy to;

- Any person working for or on behalf of F5 Foster Care
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer of F5 Foster Care
- Children and young people living with F5 Foster Care's Foster Carers
- Local Authorities who place or are considering making placements with F5 Foster Care
- Professionals who work alongside the F5 Foster Care
- General public on request

In accordance with Fostering Regulations F5 Foster Care submits a copy of our Statement of Purpose to Ofsted. F5 Foster Care Statement of Purpose has been developed and produced to meet the requirements and principles contained within the following legislation and guidance;

- The Fostering Service Regulations 2011, amended July 2013 and April 2014
- The Children Act 1989
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) 2015
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendment to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (July 2013)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- GDPR Act 2018

## Section 2

### Aims and Objectives

Our aim at F5 Foster Care is to provide safe fostering households, where children have opportunities to learn, develop and achieve their potential. In order to achieve our aims, our objective are to;

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

**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 and 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 foster carers and the placing Local Authorities.



## Section 3

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

F5 Foster Care are committed to providing a holistic service which embraces diversity and promotes equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all children and young people, foster carers, employees, customers and any other stakeholders. We will provide equality of opportunity and will achieve this by;

- 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 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 children will be made familiar with the content of the F5 Equality and Diversity Policy and the Responding to Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy.



## Section 4

### Organisational Structure and Staff

#### Organisational Structure

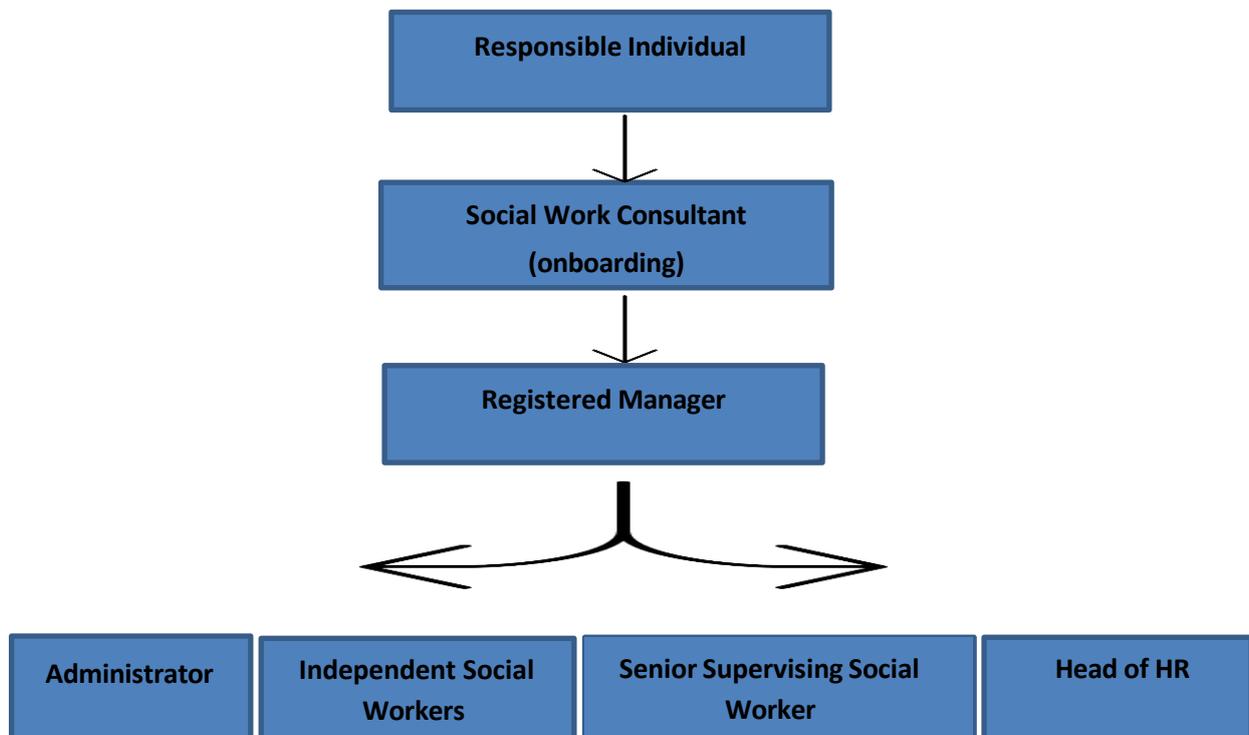
F5 Foster Care staff team on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 comprises of;

Responsible Individual x 1	Registered Manager x 1	Senior Supervising Social Worker x 1
Head of HR x 1	Administrator x 1	Social Work Consultant x 1 (onboarding)

F5 Foster Care also has a complement of specialised support staff, either Contracted or Independent. These individuals are qualified within their own field and work alongside the above staff team to support and enhance the provision of the services offered to foster carers and children and young people.

<b>Name and Address of Responsible Individual</b>	<b>Name and Address of Registered Manager</b>
Safaraz Ali	Lionel Fernando
F5 Foster Care	F5 Foster Care
Amington House	Amington House
95 Amington Road	95 Amington Road
Tyseley	Tyseley
B25 8EP	B25 8EP

Safaraz Ali reports directly to the Executive Board. The Registered Manager is responsible for overseeing all social work practice and safeguarding within the service.



## **Staffing**

### **Responsible Individual**

F5 Foster Care's Responsible Individual are responsible for strategic direction and financial governance of the Company. They work in partnership with the Registered Manager in the decisions and management of F5 Foster Care ensuring the service is safe, well run and complies with all the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations.

### **Social Work Consultant (onboarding)**

F5 Foster Care's Social Work Consultant is a qualified Social Worker registered with Social Work England. They hold a qualification in Management and are responsible for the supervision of the Registered Manager. F5 Foster carer has identified a person who can offer this support to the Registered Manager who has held positions at a senior level and has experience of Management and Consultancy within Local Authority's and Independent Fostering Agencies.

### **Registered Manager (pending status)**

The Registered Manager is a position regulated by Ofsted. F5 Foster Care's Registered Manager is a qualified Social Worker, registered with Social Work England. The current manager is in the process of being enrolled to a Diploma course in Leadership and Management and is responsible for the daily management and operation of the service, all safeguarding matters, compliance with the National Minimum Standards (NMS), Fostering Regulations and all other relevant regulatory obligations, as well as internal policies and procedures. The Registered Manager is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead for F5 Foster Care.

### **Independent Staff**

F5 Foster Care employs professionals who work as independent, across a variety of roles at F5 Foster Care. These include Form F Assessors, Fostering Panel Members, Agency Decision Maker, Fostering Medical Advisor, Independent Reviewing Officer and a Social Work Consultant. All F5 Foster Care's independent staff hold appropriate qualifications, relevant experience and membership of appropriate bodies.

### **Social Workers**

F5 Foster Care's Supervising Social Workers are registered with Social Work England. Our Social Workers have small caseloads to enable them to provide quality and robust support to our foster carers and their children in placement. Our fostering households are allocated a named Supervising Social Worker, who monitor standards of care and encourage high standards. They are responsible for;

- Supervising, advising, supporting and monitoring our foster carers in caring for children placed in their care
- Liaison with Local Authority Social Workers responsible for the child
- Contributing to the child's Statutory Reviews and supporting foster carers at such meetings and any other meetings deemed necessary
- Monthly recorded supervision with foster carers, typically this will take place in the foster carers home
- Spending time with children in their foster care placements
- Any additional visits are undertaken as necessary to support the child and their foster carers
- Undertaking the foster carers Annual Reviews
- Ensure foster carers are complying with the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations

- Undertaking as a minimum one Unannounced Visit annually within a 12 month period;
- Arrange and deliver Support Groups and participate in delivering training
- Weekly telephone calls to foster carers
- Participate in F5 Foster Care's Out of Hours Service
- Liaising with other professionals to ensure health, education and support needs are met for the child in placement
- Advocating on behalf of the child when appropriate to do so

### **Head of HR**

The Head of HR oversees provides support in all aspects of business management. If there is a demand for additional support, the Head of HR will be in a position to also contribute first line support to the Registered Manager and Directors, as well as support towards the branding and profile for the fostering service as and when needed.

### **Administrator**

F5 Foster Care's Administrator provides vital administrative support and first line HR and finance. The administrator also ensures effective communication, managing the day to day business of the office, recording, minute taking, IT support and undertaking statutory checks, ensuring they are in place and we are compliant with relevant statutory requirements and F5 Foster Care's policies and procedures.

### **Safer Recruitment**

F5 Foster Care operates Safer Recruitment, which ensures that Staff, Volunteers, foster carers and Independent Staff are suitable to work within the children's workforce. Full compliance checks, references and records are stored and can be evidenced as required.





## Section 5

### **Range of Services we offer**

F5 Foster Care works in line with all relevant national legislation and regulations relating to the placement of looked after children in foster care. We offer a range of carers to meet the needs of individual children, we can offer placements with carers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and heritages. F5 Foster Care provides a wide range of placement options for children and young people aged 0 to 18 years, these include;

#### **Short Term**

Short term placements can vary in duration, they can be for a few weeks or months but can be up to two years in duration. Short term care is provided whilst plans are being made for a child's long term future.

#### **Long Term**

Long term placements provide permanent care for children up to and into adult independence where living with family or adoption is not an option.

#### **Respite Placements**

Providing a planned respite, which can be anything from an overnight stay to a weekend or a couple of weeks.

#### **Staying Put**

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

#### **Emergency Placements**

These placements are available when a child needs somewhere safe to stay immediately. They are planned at very short notice, whilst a plan is being formulated for the child.

#### **Sibling Placements**

We recognise that it is important for children to remain together with their siblings, some of our foster carers are able to care for sibling groups to enable children to remain together.

#### **Solo Placements**

Solo placements are offered to children who could be a risk to other children and young people, or whose behaviour is so challenging that carers cannot offer enough support if other children are present.

## Section 6

### **Matching**

F5 Foster Care provides a service to Local Authorities who require placements for looked after children across the Midlands. We work in partnership with Local Authority's to identify the provision of safe, secure and appropriate foster care placements for children and young people. We operate a robust matching process based on information from the referring Local Authority, sound knowledge of the capabilities of the carers and good professional judgement. This is undertaken in consultation with the Child's Social Worker and the Social Workers of any children already in placement.

For all children we place great importance on careful matching with foster carers who are best able to meet their assessed needs. Should a child be placed with carers from a different ethnicity or culture to their own, or a child is placed has specific health needs, F5 Foster Care 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 following are considered during the matching process;

#### **In relation to the child;**

- Wishes of the child and their family
- History
- Safeguarding and Safer Care
- Education, Training or Employment
- Family Time and Contact
- Wellbeing, Health and Disability
- Child's presenting behaviours
- Behaviours and Risk Management Strategies
- Cultural, Religious, Linguistic and Identity Needs
- Aspirations, interests and desired outcomes for the child

#### **In relation to the carers;**

- Availability and Approval criteria
- Skills and experience
- Knowledge and training
- Location and availability to provide transport for Activities, School, Family Time and Contact
- Household composition and impact on other foster children, own children and other members of the household including pets



## Section 7

### **Recruitment, Assessment and Approval**

#### **Recruitment**

F5 Foster Care recruits foster carers from across the East and West Midlands. We have an ongoing programme of recruitment, predominantly using word of mouth, the internet and local advertisement. Enquiries and applications to foster are welcomed from people regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. We aim to recruit foster carers who demonstrate the key skills needed to holistically meet the needs of looked after children. The minimum age to apply to be a foster carer is 25 years, however there is no specific upper age limit.

#### **Enquiry**

When we receive an Enquiry from a prospective applicant, we complete an Enquiry Form, which details basic information about the applicant and their family. We provide each applicant with an Information Pack that provides details about fostering and F5 Foster Care.

#### **Initial Visit**

If an Enquiry is positive and deemed appropriate, an Initial Visit will be undertaken by a qualified Social Worker. They will visit their home and share the ethos of F5 Foster Care and our expectations of what our foster homes must provide for looked after children. They will explain the fostering assessment process and answer any questions the prospective applicant may have. They will also assess the applicant's potential suitability to foster, their accommodation and further details are established about the applicant's motivation to foster. They are asked in detail about any convictions and possible restrictions to foster. Applicants are informed of the need for health checks, local authority checks, references and DBS checks. The Registered Manager will decide whether the applicant is suitable to progress to the Assessment stage. If the Initial Visit is successful and both parties wish to proceed, the prospective applicant will be invited to complete an Application Form.

#### **Application**

The prospective applicant must complete an Application Form providing detailed information about themselves and their family and consent to F5 Foster Care undertaking checks and enquiries to determine their suitability to foster. To process an application to make a recommendation to Fostering Panel for approval an Assessment is approximately completed in 3 to 6 months (pending satisfactory Stage 1 checks).

#### **Assessment**

The process F5 Foster Care follow for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two stages, Stage 1 and Stage 2 of Assessment. These stages can be carried out concurrently, but the information required for Stage 1, as defined in Schedule 3 Part 1 of the 2013 Regulations, must be sought as soon as possible, and the decision about whether an applicant has successfully completed Stage 1 must be made within 10 working days of all the information required in that stage being received. If during Stage 1 it is decided that an applicant is not suitable to foster, the applicant has no right to a review of this decision by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), nor to make representations to F5 Foster Care.

However, if in Stage 2 a decision is made that the applicant is not suitable to foster then a brief report must be completed, the applicant must be advised and their comments sought within 10 working days. After the 10 days, or following receipt of the applicants' comments, whichever is the sooner, F5 Foster Care must send the report, any comments from the applicant and any other relevant information to

the Fostering Panel. The applicant may, within 28 days, seek a review of this determination by the IRM or make representations to F5 Foster Care.

Once Stage 1 and 2 are completed and providing all checks are satisfactory, the foster carers will then attend the Fostering Panel which will make recommendations regarding Approval of the foster carers. The ultimate responsibility for Approval lies with the F5 Foster Care's Agency Decision Maker. Post approval, foster carers receive an induction by their Supervising Social Worker.

### **Skills to Foster**

In the course of the assessment the applicants will be invited to undertake Skills to Foster Training, which is mandatory and delivered by F5 Foster Care and this feedback will form part of the assessment process.

### **Additional Support whilst in Assessment**

All our Foster Carers from the beginning of Stage 2 of their Assessment Process are provided with full membership to Foster Talk. This provides them with 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 an experienced Foster Carer.

### **Approval**

Once the assessment is completed the applicants will attend Fostering Panel, which comprises of a variety of professionals and independent members, including foster carers and people with experience of the looked after children system. All assessments are considered by F5 Foster Care Fostering Panel, which makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker regarding the suitability of the applicant to be a foster carer. This may include any additional terms that the Fostering Panel considers should apply to a foster carer's approval status. The Agency Decision Maker reads all the documentation and the Fostering Panel's recommendations when reaching their decision. Prospective carers are expected to attend Fostering Panel. All successful applicants are provided with a Foster Carer Agreement, which confirms their appointment as a Foster Carer for F5 Foster Care. It also gives details about the terms of approval and how this will be reviewed.

### **Fostering Panel**

F5 Foster Care's Fostering Panel makes recommendations regarding the approval, continued approval, change of approval through an Annual Review, and/or termination of approval of foster carers. In accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, membership of the Fostering Panel are people from the Agency's Central List. The Central List includes members of various backgrounds and professions who have knowledge and experience relevant to enable them to consider and make appropriate recommendations. F5 Foster Care is in the process of appointing a member of the Central List as Fostering Panel Vice Chair who will be able to chair Fostering Panel meetings if the Panel Chair is not in attendance.

### **Post Approval Induction**

After F5 Foster Care's Agency Decision Maker has agreed an approval as foster carers, newly approved foster carers are informed about the decision verbally and they receive a letter of confirmation within two working days. Upon approval F5 Foster Care allocates a Supervising Social Worker, who will undertake their Induction and answer any questions asked by the foster carers about the fostering task.

## Section 8

### Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews of foster carers take place by F5 Foster Care in line with regulatory requirements of Fostering Regulation 28 (2). A first Annual Review must take place within 12 months after approval and subsequent reviews take place every 12 months thereafter. F5 Foster Care must be satisfied that foster carers continue to meet the required standards as set out in Regulation 28 (4). All foster carers have an Annual Review, to ensure that they continue to meet the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for fostering. This review also evidences foster carers suitability to maintain their registration and approval status.

Following approval, the foster carers' first Annual Review and every third Annual Review will be presented to the Fostering Panel for their Recommendations. When foster carers Annual Reviews are not being presented to Fostering Panel an Annual Review is completed annually and chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer, who will ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled and that foster carers have the opportunity to evaluate their practice and development. The Independent Reviewing Officer will produce a Report from the meeting and also set new goals/action plan to be undertaken and achieved during the following year. The Fostering Panel minutes and the Independent Reviewing Officer's Report makes a clear Recommendation regarding continued approval, or any changes to the terms of approval, including the rationale and evidence to support those changes.

All Annual Review Recommendations, whether presented to Fostering Panel or to our Independent Reviewing Officer are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for decisions, and carers notified in writing of those decisions.

F5 Foster Care must be satisfied that the foster carers continue to meet the required Standards as set out in Regulation 28 (4). Annual Reviews are undertaken annually on each fostering household or more frequently, where there is a change of circumstances or following;

- A serious complaint, allegation of abuse, or other matters of serious concern.
- A significant change of household circumstances, such as a carer's adult child returning home, a new partner joins, relationship breakdown or separations.
- Medical concerns regarding foster carers.
- A request to amend the foster carer's approval for example, an increase or decrease in their approval.
- Serious breach of Foster Carers Agreements.
- Accumulated concerns about foster carers' practice.
- Allegations.
- De-registrations.
- Where a carer is not working in partnership with the agency, including a lack of engagement and attendance with training and continued professional development.
- A death of a foster carer.

## Section 9

### **Support for foster carers**

#### **Foster Carer Support Groups**

F5 Foster Care holds regular Support Groups. The purpose of these are to allow carers to share experiences in a safe environment, learn from peers, develop skills and increase their knowledge. We also have regular Guest Speakers to enhance foster carers knowledge further.

#### **Out of Hours Support**

F5 Foster Care believe that when foster carers know they have available support from Out of Hours they will 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.

#### **Independent Support**

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

Foster Talk membership also includes;

- Foster Carer Independent Financial Advice
- Arrest and Interview Assistance
- Foster Carer Legal Expenses Insurance
- Foster Carer Accountancy Advice Helpline
- Foster Carer 24-hour Legal Advice Helpline
- Foster Carer 24-hour Counselling Helpline
- Foster Carer Tax Advice
- Foster Carer Education Advisory Service
- Foster Carer Social Work Support Line
- Foster Carer Medical and First Aid Helpline
- Foster Carer Discounts
- Foster Carer Online Forum
- Foster Talk Magazine

We also provide foster carers who provide practical and emotional support as “buddies” for foster carers both pre and post approval.

#### **Activities and Events**

F5 Foster Care organises events and activities for fostering families and children they are caring for. This provides an opportunity for them to meet other carers, children and staff from F5 Foster Care in a more informal environment, have fun and enhance their relationships.

#### **Policies and Procedures**

All foster carers receive a comprehensive Foster Carers Handbook which provides guidance and support to carers about F5 Foster Care Policy and Procedures and their role and responsibilities, which is updated regularly and is a point of reference for foster carers and staff. The handbook contains information on policies and procedures, recording, finance, legislation, the complaints procedure, access to records, child protection, support, health and safety matters, education information, managing behaviour and various other subjects relevant to foster carers and the task of caring for a child or young person.

### **Unannounced Visits**

All our foster carers receive a minimum of one Unannounced Visit annually, in line with National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations.

### **Record Keeping**

F5 Foster Carers maintain records of the children and young people they look after, using our online system Jelly Baby. Keeping records is an important part of the foster carers' role and accurate, factual recordings help us to make sure we achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people. The recordings include routines, general health, achievements, milestones or new experiences.

Recordings where required, are shared with the Local Authority and can be used as evidence in Court Proceedings or to form part of the child's long term planning.

### **Supervising Carers**

All F5 Foster Carer's have an allocated Supervising Social Worker who undertakes formal supervision with their foster carers once a month which is recorded. Visits can be increased as required or if the need determines. Telephone calls take place weekly to offer the foster carers support.

### **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 Annual Surveys.
- We encourage foster carers to talk to the Registered Manager.
- We have an accessible Compliments and Complaints process.
- We ask foster carers to complete comments for their Annual Review.

### **Benefits**

#### **FosterTalk Discount portal**

FosterTalk's membership provides access to thousands of special offers on lifestyle products and services. A whole range of discounts to support children and families which are all accessible through the members' area of the FosterTalk's secure website. F5 Foster Care fully funds the registration and renewal of membership for all approved foster carers and fulltime staff.

#### **Blue Light Card**

We provide all our foster carers with a Blue Light Card, fully funded by F5 Foster Care. Blue Light Cards offer a range of discounts from retailers, holidays, cars, insurance and mobile phones.

## Section 10

### **Training and Development**

F5 Foster Care offers a wide range of training, covering preapproval training for applicants, induction training for newly approved carers and post approval training which incorporates the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD). A comprehensive rolling programme of training is available and reviewed regularly, meeting the ongoing professional development of foster carers throughout their fostering career. Each foster carer will have a Personal Development Plan, which is reviewed annually or before if required.

F5 Foster Care believes that a comprehensive training programme for foster carers is key to their personal and professional development. Training provides foster carers with the required skills and knowledge, necessary in providing a high quality service. It is also key to safeguarding children, foster carers and their families, by informing them of how to care for children safely.

#### **Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards**

The Training, Support and Development Standards provide guidance for foster carers on the requirements for their training, development and continuous professional development. All new foster carers have 12 months to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards, from when they are approved as foster carers. They are supported by their Supervising Social Worker to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards and Workshops are available for foster carers who wish to have some additional input into the completion of these. The Registered Manager has the quality assurance role and is also the person responsible for signing off the Training, Support and Development Standards.

#### **Employees**

All staff receive regular support and supervision appropriate to their role, and an Annual Appraisal of performance and objectives. In addition, Supervising Social Workers have group practice workshops for further critical reflection, which can be case specific, or focused on complex practice issues and Serious Case Reviews.

Supervision takes place monthly for Social Workers and bimonthly for non-Social Work staff. All staff receive an Annual Appraisal, which reviews staffs professional development, ensuring that training and development needs specific to their area of responsibility are promoted. All staff undertake mandatory training, which is renewed every 3 years.



## Section 11

### **Consultation and Support for Children and Young People**

Our Fostering Service provides opportunities for engagement and consultation with children through one to one work, foster carer Annual Review feedback and our Children's Annual Survey. Supervising Social Workers meet and talk with children and young people on a quarterly basis as a minimum, this could be as part of regular supervision and/or a support visit to the foster carers.

We provide activity days, catering for different age ranges and interests, where children can meet each other, play and learn alongside each other. Our activities are organised for children in placement and the birth children of foster carers.

Listening to the children and young people we care for and the birth children of our foster carers helps us to keep them all safe and develops our service. Children in placement and birth children are also encouraged to complete feedback for foster carers Annual Reviews. This also contributes to the development and improvement of our Fostering Service. Feedback from Surveys, activities and consultation events help us to gather, share and act on these views.

#### **Children's Guide**

Our Children's Guide provides information about our Fostering Service and contains contact details for outside advocacy groups. Every child and young person receive a copy of our Children's Guide at the start of their placement. We have two Children's Guides, one for younger children and one for older children, they include a summary of what coming into care involves, they explain the roles of the different professionals and provide contact information of the Children's Commissioner and Ofsted if they need help or advice. Our Children's Guides can be translated into other languages as required. Details of our complaints procedure and contact details for the relevant governing body are also included in our Children's Guides.

#### **Memory Boxes**

Each child that is placed with our foster carers is given a Memory Box, these are personalised to the child considering their age and ability. This is to support the child's sense of identity and their memories, both now and when they are a young person and then an adult. Keeping 'real' belongings and memories that link to their life, in a meaningful way will support their self-esteem and understanding of their journey whilst in our care. Foster carers are encouraged to add to the child's Memory Box with achievements, rewards, photos and anything that is important to the child.

#### **Education**

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

Carers and staff are expected to seek the child's views about school, including the child's aspirations and goals and share these 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 school meetings. Every child where applicable, in our care will have a 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. For any child who is not in formal education, employment or training, support and advice will be sought to ensure they continue to learn, whether this be virtually or educational activities. staff and foster carers will be the best advocates on behalf of the children in their care.

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

### **Healthy Living and Healthy Outcomes**

It is a priority for F5 Foster Care 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 foster carers are required to Register each child with a GP, 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 health appointments are upheld. 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.

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

### **Promoting Independence and the Transition to Adulthood**

At F5 Foster care we believe regardless of the age of the young person, they need to develop skills to enable them to become as independent as possible and should be encouraged to take responsibilities when they are able to do so.

At F5 Foster Care we offer a Bronze, Silver and Gold Independence Portfolio, which is aimed at enhancing the young person's skills and identifying any gaps. This is completed with the young person or if they are competent, they could complete it independently.

Throughout their placement, children will be supported (at various age and appropriate stages) to understand social and sexual relationships, develop self-esteem and emotional resilience, access education or employment. Also, to develop practical skills such as, self-care, shopping, keeping and preparing food, managing money, accessing financial support and many more. Foster carers and Supervising Social Workers will work alongside the child to empower them to develop these skills.

### Safeguarding

At F5 Foster Care we want all our children to be safe from harm and we will always take our safeguarding obligations extremely seriously to protect the welfare of all children within our care. We are committed to placing children in fostering households, that will ensure their needs are met and they are safe.

We have safeguarding procedures in place, which all staff and foster carers are required to fully adhere to. Where there is a need to review any safeguarding practices to ensure safe care is provided, this will be done in consultation with the child's Social Worker, foster carer and where appropriate the child.

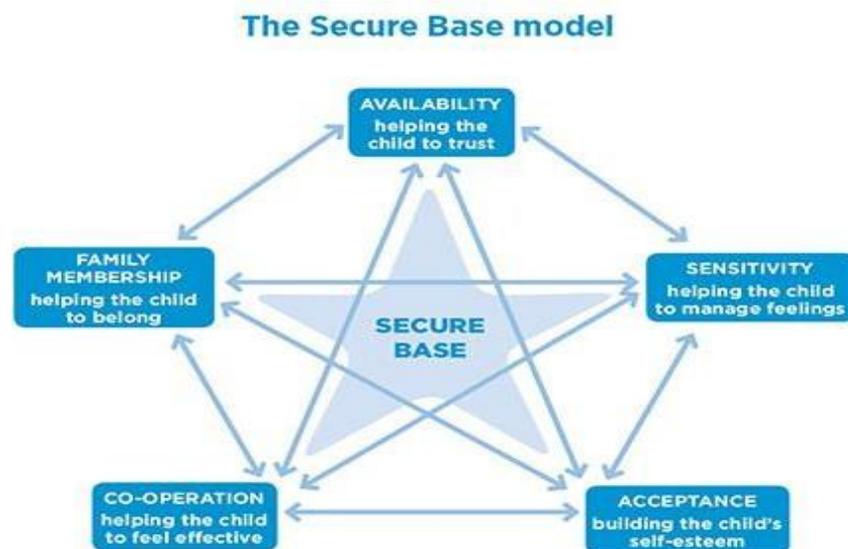
### Family Time

F5 Foster Care recognises the importance of maintaining relationships with people that are important to children. We ensure that all children in our care are encouraged to maintain contact with those most important to them. The duration and frequency of this will be discussed at the start of the child's placement and agreed with the child's Social Worker. Foster carers will encourage children to make positive lasting friendships and will facilitate contact or outings with friends where appropriate.

### Therapeutic Support

At F5 Foster Care we recognise that children have an absolute entitlement to receive care and support through therapeutic provisions. We have a strong commitment to creating sensitive environments for children to develop and grow. We will support children to access therapeutic services as per their assessed needs and work closely with any recommendations or support plans.

Our approach is well grounded based on the Secure Base Model, this model provides a framework for therapeutic caregiving which builds resilience and helps infants, children and young people move towards greater security. We recognise that children need to feel secure in their relationships with the adults who look after them. Where children have not experienced sensitive parenting that promotes security and resilience, they will find it difficult to trust and will struggle with managing their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.



## Section 12

### Compliments and Complaints

At F5 Foster Care we take all complaints seriously and ensure they are investigated in accordance with our Complaints Policy. Anyone who has contact with F5 Foster Care has the right to receive a quality and professional service. Any child, foster carer, member of staff, family member or any person who has had an involvement with F5 Foster Care are entitled to compliment or complain about the quality of the services we provide. A foster carer, relative or Local Authority Social Worker can complain or send a compliment on a child or young person's behalf.

#### Stage 1 Complaints – Informal Resolution

Where possible, we aim to resolve complaints informally, at local level and this should be the preferred option. Complainants are encouraged to talk to the person with whom they have a complaint with in the first instance, as this allows opportunity to explore the issue and seek any clarification, which often leads to informal resolution.

#### Stage 2 Complaints – Formal Consideration

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, or at the outset they wish for it to progress to Stage 2. The complainant will be advised that they must put their complaint in writing to the Registered Manager, who will then contact the complainant within 7 working days to advise who they have instructed in relation to the complaint and will advise them of their name and the expected time frame for the investigation.

A report will be completed following the investigation, detailing how the matter was investigated, by whom and what outcome was reached with relevant evidence to support the report's conclusions.

#### Stage 3 - Independent Review

This is the final stage of the complaints process. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation, they must confirm this in writing, including reasons to the Registered Manager or Responsible Individual who will arrange for the case to be reviewed by an independent person within 30 days.

The Independent person will consider the documentation available in relation to the complaint and any further written representations that the complainant wishes to make in relation to the investigation. They will reach a decision within 5 working days of the meeting and the complainant will be advised of the outcome in a Report to include any actions in order to resolve the situation within 10 working days.

All complaints are reviewed by the Registered Manager, to improve our service provision. Any compliments received are recorded and celebrated. We will always work to improve practice following any complaints if they identify any gaps in service provision and will lead to the development of improved service.

F5 Foster Care Complaints Policy is made available to staff, foster carers, young people and all stakeholders. All complaints and outcomes are addressed thoroughly and recorded.

### **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.

F5 Foster Care will ensure that the child and their Social Worker are aware of how they can make a complaint or representation. This is documented in the Children's Guide which will be provided to a child when they are placed with our foster carers.

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 their 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. F5 Foster Care and foster carers will ensure that these details available to the child should they be needed.

## Section 13

### **Finance**

F5 foster carers receive a weekly fostering fee paid directly into their bank account (paid fortnightly). The level of the fee is reflective of the complexity of the care provided. In addition, all carers will receive a maintenance allowance, 2 weeks holiday allowance, birthday allowance and a festival allowance. All savings for children are deducted at source and paid to the Local Authority when a child leaves their foster carers.

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.

Foster Carers are self-employed and must seek their own advice on liability for Income Tax and National Insurance. This can be accessed through Foster Talk, which membership is funded for all foster carers through F5 Foster Care.

F5 Foster Care's finances are subject to annual financial audit.

## Section 14

### **Professional Membership**

#### **CoramBAAF**

F5 Foster Care has a corporate membership with CoramBAAF. CoramBAAF members benefits are designed to keep up to date with new developments, access expertise and advice, participate in networks and groups, improve practice delivery, evidence regulatory compliance, contribute to consultations and discussions, and shape policy and practice. CoramBAAF promotes the highest standards of child centred policies and services.

#### **Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP)**

F5 Foster Care is a member with NAFP, which is a national charity that enables and equips children and young people to hold to account the services that are responsible for their care. They uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

#### **Foster Talk**

Foster Talk's sole aim is to provides 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 approved foster carers and staff.

## Section 15

### **Contact Details**

All the activities of F5 Foster Care are inspected and regulated by Ofsted who have a legal responsibility to inspect all Independent Fostering Agencies to monitor the quality of the service provision and to ensure compliance is met with Legislation, National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Regulations.

### **Name and Address of Inspection Body**

Ofsted,  
Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street,  
Manchester,  
M1 2WD

**Tel:** 0300 123 1231

**General Enquiries Email:** [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **Children's Commissioner Address;**

Children's Commissioner for England,  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
20 Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3BT

**Tel:** 020 7783 8330 **Email:** [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

**Free and confidential contact lines for children and young people:** Tel: 0800 528 0731

**Email:** [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

### **F5 Foster Care**

F5 Foster Care  
Amington House  
95 Amington Road  
Tyseley  
B25 8EP

**Tel:** 0121 2710555

**Email:** [team@f5fostercare.co.uk](mailto:team@f5fostercare.co.uk)