

# Statement of Purpose Summary



## Warwickshire Local Authority Fostering Services

Under the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 every Fostering Service is required to produce a **Statement of Purpose**. This is an important document against which the Fostering Service is inspected by Ofsted.

The Statement of Purpose covers the following matters:

- the Aim and Objectives of the Service and the Principles and Standards of Care;
- the management and staffing arrangements;
- the recruitment, approval and review of foster carers;
- services provided;
- training and support to foster carers;
- number of foster carers and children and young people placed within the service;
- details of complaints and their outcomes;
- contact details for further information.

### **The Aim and Objectives of Warwickshire County Council Fostering Service and Principals of Care**

The aim of Warwickshire Foster Care Service is

***To provide quality and safe care within a family setting for children and young people who are unable to live within their own families.***

The Service objectives are to:

- provide a skilled and flexible service that is able to meet the wide range of assessed needs of children and their families;
- ensure that foster carers are trained and supported in providing safe and appropriate care to children who live with them;
- enable children to be placed within their local communities;
- respect and promote the child's heritage, culture and identity;
- promote contact between the child and their family;
- promote the child's health and development through good standards of care and the support from other agencies particularly health and education services;
- ensure openness and partnership working between all those involved and concerned with the child's welfare.

Principles underpinning the Service are:

- all foster carers are vetted, prepared and assessed in line with national regulations and requirements;
- the Warwickshire Fostering Panel considers all carer applications and reviews of approval;
- all approved foster carers are required to sign the Foster Care Agreement;

- all foster carers have a named Fostering social worker;
- wherever possible all placements made are matched to ensure a good fit between the needs of the child and the skills and experience of the foster carer(s);
- all foster carers are provided with required documentation to support the placement of the child in their care;
- children receive a carer profile prior to placement;
- children have their placement and plan reviewed within four weeks;
- children in foster care have a named allocated social worker;
- black and mixed race children placed in foster care are supported by the REACCH project;
- foster carers, looked after children and their parents have access to the Warwickshire County Council's Complaints and Representation procedure.

## **The Management Structure and Staffing Arrangements**

The Principal Operations Manager – Fostering and Adoption is the lead manager for the Fostering Service and is responsible for the development of the Service and ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Fostering regulations and standards.

There are six Fostering Services Teams.

The central Fostering Services Team is responsible for the marketing, recruitment, preparation and training of foster carers. The Foster Care NVQ Centre offers the 'Health & Social Care' Level 3 award to foster carers, which is supported by a comprehensive training programme.

The five district Fostering Services Teams assess and support foster carers, and are responsible for placement matching, foster carer supervision and their annual reviews.

The Service is supported by a Foster Care Development Officer.

The Principal Operations Manager meets with the Operational Managers responsible for the Service at regular intervals. This ensures standardisation of practice and service delivery, addresses the overall performance of the service and considers new developments, initiatives and requirements aimed at service improvement.

## **Recruitment, approval and review of foster carers**

The marketing strategy is called 'A Time to Care'. Recruitment of foster carers takes place using the full range of media and marketing opportunities.

Since January 2002 the Service has promoted the professional status of fostering through the introduction of a 'payment for skills' scheme. This involves the assessment of foster carer's competencies through the production of a foster carer's portfolio and the promotion of foster carer training.

The assessment of foster carers is guided by national standards and guidance issued by Fostering Network – Code of Practice 1999.

Enquirers are sent a Fostering Information Pack on the same day of their enquiry. Following contact with the central Fostering Services Team, an Information Duty Phone Call is made within three working days, an Initial Home Visit is arranged within seven days and an application form is left with the enquirer(s) at this stage.

Applicants are invited to the 'Skills to Foster' preparation training and references and other statutory checks are requested.

The assessment using Fostering Network A10 is completed by a qualified social worker from the district Fostering Services Team and should be completed within six months of the application. The assessment is underpinned by a working agreement completed with the applicants.

The assessed competencies are:

- caring for children;
- providing a safe and caring environment;
- working as part of a team;
- commitment towards own development and training.

Applicants are invited, and have the opportunity, to attend the Fostering Panel meeting.

The Head of Children's Services receives the recommendation of the Fostering Panel and, on behalf of the agency, makes the final decision about approval.

Approved foster carers receive induction and a comprehensive Induction Pack.

The Panel considers the annual review of all foster carers and recommends to the agency the ongoing approval, variation or termination of a carer's approval status.

## **Services Provided**

Warwickshire offer the following placement services:

- Emergency Duty Scheme –provides outside office hours emergency care for children and young people in crisis.
- Emergency Foster Care – placement of a child on the same day as referral. A temporary arrangement subject to review.
- Short-Term Foster Care – planned placement that could be up to two years to assist in the assessment of the child's needs and prepares the child for moving on in line with agreed care plans.
- Permanent Foster Care – a placement where the foster carers' understanding, expectations and commitment is that the placement will continue into late adolescence providing ongoing support into adulthood where required.
- Long-Term Foster Care – a placement for older, young people in excess of two years leading towards a longer term plan of rehabilitation or independent living.
- Respite and Shared Care – provides regular, short respite breaks to children living in the community, or to other foster carers, where this is part of the child's care plan.
- Family Link – short-stay care for disabled children with a series of overnight or weekend breaks on a long-term planned basis.
- Supported Lodgings – a placement for young people aged 17 years plus to develop independence skills and confidence to manage living on their own.
- Family and Friends – provides placements for children with a relative or friend who is approved as a foster carer for a specific child.

## **Training and Support to Foster Carers**

The service provides five one-day stage one core training courses. It is expected that all foster carers will complete the core training within two years of their approval.

Stage two core training is available but is not mandatory.

In addition there is a Foster Care Training Strategy with a substantial county training programme. There is district based training also available.

The core and county training satisfies the NVQ Level 3 Health & Social Care award, underpinning knowledge requirements.

Distance Learning Packs are available on the core training subjects and online learning will be available as soon as there is an infrastructure in place.

There is a comprehensive network of support services to foster carers and children in placement. These include:

- Membership of the Fostering Network
- Fostering Network Advice and Mediation Worker
- Local support groups
- Out of Hours Support Line
- Financial remuneration in line with Fostering Network recommendations rates
- Insurance cover
- Grants and loans towards adaptations to carers' properties
- Respite care
- TELAC – support to children with educational issues
- SIBS – support to children/carers where sexually inappropriate behaviour is an issue
- REACCH - assessment, support and services to children from black and minority ethnic communities
- Designated health care staff including drug advisory workers and workers from the Teenage
- Pregnancy Strategy
- Barnardos Advocacy Service for looked after children.

## **Number of Approved Foster Carers and Children Placed**

The Service maintains a register of all approved foster carers and of those children placed within the Service. This information is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team of Warwickshire County Council Children, Young People and Families Directorate.

## **Complaints about the Service**

Through the Customer Relations Team complaints about the Service are monitored and reported to the Principal Operations Manager.

### **The Customer Relations Team can be contacted at:**

Warwickshire County Council  
Customer Relations Team  
Shire Hall  
PO Box 48  
Warwick  
CV34 4RR  
Tel 01926 414113

In addition an annual report is produced by the Fostering Network Advice and Mediation worker that may also highlight issues about the Service that require attention.

## Contact Details and Further Information

**For further information or a full copy of the Statement of Purpose contact:**

Principal Operations Manager – Fostering and Adoption  
Rugby District Office  
Fawsley House  
Hillmorton Road  
Rugby  
CV22 5BX

**Ofsted inspects and regulates Fostering Services and can be contacted at the following address:**

Ofsted  
Building C  
Cumberland Place  
Park Row  
Nottingham  
NG1 6HJ  
Tel no 0845 6404040