



Quality Foster Care LTD **Statement of Mission & Purpose**

Quality Foster Care (The Agency, QFC) is an Independent Fostering Agency based in South Benfleet, Essex. The intention and purpose of the Agency is to provide first class fostering placements for Looked After Children. QFC assesses, recruits, supports and trains foster carers to provide a wide range of placements.

Constitution of the Agency

It is our intention at QFC. to provide a fostering service of the highest quality. Quality Foster Care is a family based organisation whose members have been directly involved in fostering for the past three decades. Our aim is to be the best. Our pledge to provide a quality service is essential to our philosophy. Our aspiration is to keep a realistic pricing policy without lowering standards. We are keenly aware of the need for providing a best value service to our clients whilst achieving the best possible outcomes for Looked after Children, especially during times of Local Authority spending cutbacks.

Quality Foster Care LTD is a private limited company and was registered under the Companies Act 1985 on 19th June 2002. The Companies registered office is Companies House, Crown Way, Maindy Cardiff CF14 3UZ

Management Structure

QFC LTD has two Directors, Keeley Nash and Tim Sheehan; Jenni Paterson is the Registered Manager and a qualified Social Worker.

Keeley Nash – Director and the Responsible Individual, responsible for Financial and Strategic Management, Marketing and Quality Assurance.

Tim Sheehan – Director and the Company Secretary, responsible for Financial and Strategic Management, Marketing and Quality Assurance.

Jenni Paterson – is the Registered Manager, Practice Educator and Qualified Social Worker responsible for social work management, training, recruitment, assessment, support and supervision to staff, students and Foster Carers.

Staff

There are currently two full time qualified social workers:

Heather Brown and Rose Goodrick – who provide supervision and support to Foster Carers as well as contributing to the initial fostering preparation training. They also assess foster carers and undertake direct work with children

Karen Stevenson is the Agency full time administrator, who provides reception duties and is also the Fostering Panel Administrator.

Maggie Crompton is employed as the Agency Decision Maker.

There are currently 5 self employed sessional workers who provide supervised contact for children with their birth families.

There is a Central List of Panel Members who sit on Fostering Panels, their individual experience includes: Social Work, Teaching, Counselling, Fostering, Health.

Our Social Work staff members are all mature and experienced workers who live close to the agency. It is a stable staff team with a wealth of previous experience in family placement, residential work. All staff members receive appropriate training and supervision. Supervision for Social Workers is provided by the registered manager on a monthly basis and there are regular staff meetings and “catch up” meetings to assist with communication. All staff have supervision agreements and are embark on the Agency performance appraisal system. Social workers participate in training alongside the Foster Carers and have the opportunity of attending external training courses.

There is a robust staff care ethos and staff members are nurtured and treated with respect at all times. Staff are provided with an employee welcome pack.

Associates

Dr. Karen Lehner is the medical adviser who delivers training to foster carers on health related matters.

Alan Johnstone – Independent Consultant provides Consultation to the Agency Manager

Carl Adams and Lucinda Lidstone provide counselling to children and Foster Carers

Where we are

The Quality Foster Care Office is situated along the High Road in South Benfleet Essex. It has close road links to the A127 and A13, both connect to the M25. The nearest train station is Benfleet on the Southend - Fenchurch Street Line. The office consists of a reception office, three further offices, one meeting room and also a contact room. We have our own kitchen facilities, and there is free car parking in a car park to the rear of the property. QFC also has use of nearby premises for larger meetings.

Equal Opportunities

QFC LTD has a clear commitment to equal opportunities and adheres to a strong anti-discriminatory policy.

Values

We emphasise the quality aspect of our philosophy, for we place quality above quantity, always keeping the child and carer's well being at the forefront of our service. We acknowledge that the well being of the children and young people, whose care is entrusted to us, is the principal focus for all our activities and promote the following aims.

- To ensure that the child is free from abuse and neglect
- To promote the physical, emotional, social and educational development of the child in care in line with the five Every Child Matters Outcomes to: **Be Healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Wellbeing.**
- To provide Looked After Children with a healthy, supportive and nurturing home life, providing affection, approval and encouragement – supported by age-appropriate boundaries.
- To provide Looked After Children with the same opportunities as other children
- To ensure that the child is treated sensitively and equitably, with due regard to his/her cultural, religious and linguistic background, racial origins, personal capabilities and other, particular needs.
- To ensure that placements are most closely matched to the needs of the child as jointly established by the child, his/her social worker and Q.F.C.
- To ensure that the child is encouraged and enabled to reach his/her full potential in all areas of life.
- To ensure that the child's contact with family and friends is promoted and that children learn to make and sustain appropriate relationships
- To make certain that the child's opinions, are heard, understood and - where appropriate – acted upon.
- To work with the child providing them with the opportunities that will assist them in becoming responsible adults and parents themselves.

Foster Carers

Recruitment

In order to provide a wide range of placement opportunities, QFC LTD has a recruitment strategy in place and a retention and reward policy.

- All foster carers are subject to an in-depth assessment that follows BAAF guidelines. Following assessment Carers are presented to the Quality Foster Care Fostering Panel for recommendation.
- All assessments are compliant with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards 2011
- Safeguarding checks are completed on applicants
- Assessment are made of pets in the household
- Health and safety checks on the home are completed as well as verification of car documents
- As part of the assessment process, prospective Foster Carers complete the **Skills to Foster** preparation group and a Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP).
- The Agency as a good practice policy of not placing children under the age of five with Foster Carers who smoke

Training

The Agency sees training and education as a vital part of the fostering role and therefore expects Foster Carers to participate in the ongoing Agency Training Programme.

- PPDP will be re-evaluated at annual review
- Induction training will include Safeguarding and First Aid training and the Training Support and development Standards for Foster Carers (framework currently provided by the Child Workforce Development Council)
- A full and high quality training programme is provided including workshops on attachment, managing challenging behaviour valuing diversity, first aid, safeguarding, communication and substance misuse
- The quality of training provided will be evaluated by Foster Carers and the Agency after each session.

Supervision and Support

The Agency acknowledges the challenges that fostering brings and the need to support foster carers in their role

- A Supervising Social Worker is allocated to provide monthly supervision. The role of SSW is to oversee the care of the child and to ensure that positive outcomes are being achieved.
- Foster carers receive support at all meetings in connection with their Looked After Child
- There is foster carers support group that meets regularly to provide peer support
- At least one unannounced visit every year.
- 24 hours Out of Hours helpline by known QFC social worker
- Every fostering household will become a member of Fostering Network who offer impartial support and advice.
- Following an allegation foster carers will be supported through the process
- Prompt payment to Foster Carers

Fostering Panel

- The Fostering Panel is Chaired by an Independent Panel Chair
- The panel is compliant with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011

Services provided

In order to provide the highest quality service the Agency monitors standards of care through a number of methods and constantly re-evaluates and looks for ways to improve by consultation with our service users. This is done by;

- Regular supervision of carers and staff
- Review of foster carers taking into account the views of service users
- Unannounced visits
- Interim reviews
- Consultation with foster carers, birth children and service users
- Actively seeking out the wishes and feelings of Looked After Children
- Actively learning from complaints and responding positively
- Challenging poor practice and addressing problems accordingly

In addition to foster care placements QFC LTD can provide:

- Supervised contact by supervisors who receive training and supervision
- Assessment of child's need for counselling (4 sessions included in the package)
- Therapeutic support for carers from our associated counsellors
- Restorative parenting programme

Partnership Working

The Agency sees that working in partnership is a crucial element to the success of fostering placements. We regard foster carers as an important part of the team around the child and promote full and regular communication with our colleagues in Local Authorities and other agencies.

- Foster carers and QFC staff attend all Looked After Children reviews and PEP meetings
- Monthly reflective summaries of childrens' wishes and moods provided to the Local Authority.

Working in the Community

QFC LTD has a strong commitment to promoting a positive image of fostering within the community:

- We have links with the University of Essex and are involved in interviewing of prospective social work students
- We provide social work placements
- We work with the local children's' hospice in a fundraising capacity
- Community events such as MacMillan Nurses – World's Biggest Coffee Morning
- We have raised funds for BAAF.

Quality Assurance

In order to provide a service that is reviews the quality of the service offered QFC:

- Keeps statistics of referrals to the Agency
- Keeps statistics of enquires to foster
- Quality Assurance reports presented to Fostering Panel
- Annual reviews completed to timescale

Safeguarding

It is the responsibility of all employees of Quality Foster Care Ltd to be aware of the Agency's Safeguarding Policies, and this procedure cross refers with the S.E.T (Southend, Essex, Thurrock) child protection guidelines and to recognise their role and responsibilities as identified within those procedures.

Complaints and Representations

All children and foster carers are provided with information about how to make a complaint about the service. Children and Local Authorities are provided with a leaflet at the time of placement. Foster carers are provided with information about making a complaint in their carers' handbook and within their Foster Carer Agreement.

Carers and children are encouraged to discuss concerns with their social worker in the first instance but are also able to make a complaint via the QFC complaints procedure. Comments and complaints can also be via:

OFSTED
National Business Unit,
Royal Exchange Buildings,
St Ann's Square,
Manchester, M2 7LA
0845 404045

Roger Morgan
Childrens' Rights Director
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE
0800 538 0731