

“ They need
someone who
cares ”

Wigan[♥]
Council



Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

Prepared in accordance with
The Fostering Services Regulations 2011
and National Minimum Standards

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1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the following statute law:

- The Fostering Service Regulations (2002 and 2011)
- National Minimum Standards Fostering Services (2011)
- The Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations
- UK ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Care Standards Act (2000)

This Statement of Purpose includes the following content in accordance with Fostering Service regulations:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the Fostering service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by the fostering service
- Assessment and approval of Foster Carers
- Training and support for Foster Carers

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to, and made available upon request, to:

- Ofsted
- The Local Authority responsible for managing the service
- Any person working for the purpose of the Fostering Service
- Approved foster carers in Wigan Council
- Children and Young People in foster care (subject to age and understanding)
- Parents or any person with parental responsibility
- The placing authority of any child placed in the care of the service

The Statement of purpose is subject to regular review, at least annually, and whenever staffing changes occur in the provision of the service.

2. Vision for the Service

The Deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works here to work together to create a better borough. Wigan Council recognises that we need to change the way we behave in order to make this vision a reality. We need to encourage and support behaviour change in our communities and amongst some of our children, young people and families.

The Deal for Children and Young People has been developed between the council and local young people. The result saw over 1000 young people share their views on what they valued the most, how they wanted the council to support them and what they could do to make their community a better place to live. Combining this feedback with information from other surveys The Deal for Children and Young People has been developed. The Fostering service is fully committed to the vision behind The Deal and will ensure that Foster Carers promote this asset based approach with the children and young people they look after

The fostering service has also begun to develop The Deal for Foster Carers. Consultation with carers has begun to take place and a draft has been developed. The aim is to launch The Deal for Foster Carers in 2017

3. Foster Carer Charter

We have produced and published Wigan's Foster Carer Charter. In signing this charter, the Fostering Service, Wigan council and Foster Carers agree to reflect the spirit and intentions of the Charter in their actions and are committing to developing a shared understanding.

Foster Carers can expect the fostering service to:

- Promote the professionalism of our foster carers to other professionals, service providers and the local community.
- Have a continued commitment to foster carers training and development.
- Provide real opportunities for foster carer inclusion and consultation (listen and respond to carers) via consultation days, newsletters, forums and support groups.
- Promote delegation of responsibility to foster carers and advocate for their involvement in care planning, decision making and court reports.
- Respect our foster carers for their experience, knowledge base and common sense and support them to be strong advocate for our looked after children.
- Provide access to Independent advice and support regarding complaints and allegations.
- Provide support and guidance to foster carers moving children on post 18 years and have a commitment to working with other departments and authorities to improve Staying Put services for looked after children.

The Fostering Service can expect foster carers to:

- Be inspirational, positive role models for our looked after children.
- Support young people through transition into adulthood and independence.
- Be strong advocates.
- Be positive and pro active in promoting and managing contact with their birth family and work closely with birth families in the child's best interests.
- Help children develop their own individuality and promote their personal growth to help them reach their full potential.

4. Aims

We aim to provide an effective, flexible Fostering Service which offers placements of a high quality. As corporate parents for our children in Public Care, we aim to take forward positively this aspiration for them and with them. We intend to achieve this by meeting the following broad aims:

- Provision of a Fostering Service with flexibility to meet the diverse needs of children.
- Provision of preparation, training and support to Foster Carers to enable them to offer a competent, safe and caring service.
- Provision of appropriate resources to ensure the Fostering Service can compete as a viable service.

5. Objectives

To provide Foster Care placements where each child will have stability, security and a warm, safe nurturing environment in which they can develop and thrive

- To carefully match the needs of children and young people with the skills of Foster Carers
- To ensure the cultural and diversity needs of children and young people are adequately met
- To enable all children in care to benefit from educational opportunities and are prepared for independence when appropriate
- To ensure a child's physical and emotional health care needs are met and a positive healthy life style is actively encouraged
- To promote contact with the birth family and significant others during a placement and to encourage and facilitate this where appropriate
- To ensure detailed Placement Plans are completed and acted upon.
- To work in partnership with Foster Carers ensuring access to training, guidance and the support of a fully qualified, designated supervising social worker at all times
- To ensure provision of 24 hour support for Foster Carers, children and young people
- A commitment to the development of the service through service user and stakeholder participation and consultation and the use of advocacy where appropriate
- To ensure the emotional health and wellbeing of all children in care placed in foster care
- To ensure Foster Carers act as a responsible and reasonable carer in promoting the interests and welfare of children and young people in their care
- To provide children and young people with a range of social opportunities and experiences they may not previously have been able to access
- A focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and high service provision

6. Diversity

- 6.1** For Wigan Council, embodying the Deal it is about celebrating diversity, both within our local communities and within our workforce by viewing and treating difference as a source of great strength. We ensure that through our resourcing, commissioning, policies and services we take diversity into account.
- 6.2** The Fostering Service has a key role to play in terms of meeting children's needs through the provision of a diverse body of foster carers. The service will seek to develop strategies to widen the sources of placements for children from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in order to meet their individual needs.
- 6.3** Assessment and training of carers includes issues, of Equality and Diversity using accepted formats such as Fostering Networks Skills to Foster; Preparation and assessment format and the Training Standards for Foster Carers.

7. The Agency Decision Maker and Fostering Service Manager

7.1 Lynn Bennett is the Agency Decisions Maker for Wigans fostering Service.

Lynn is the Service Manager Corporate Parenting, responsible for the Transition and Leaving Care Team and the Residential Children's Homes including "edge of Care Provisions".

Lynne qualified as a social worker in 1997 and holds the Diploma In Social Work and NVQ 4 and Diploma in Management.

Lynne has worked for Wigan Council since 1979 and has many years of working with children with a range of ages and abilities in both school setting and in children's homes. During this period Lynne was promoted to a Registered Manager position.

Since 2003 Lynne has been in a Team Manager post for a Children in Care and Care Leavers field work team and with responsibility for the Local Authority Children's homes until 2014 when promoted to the Service Manager post

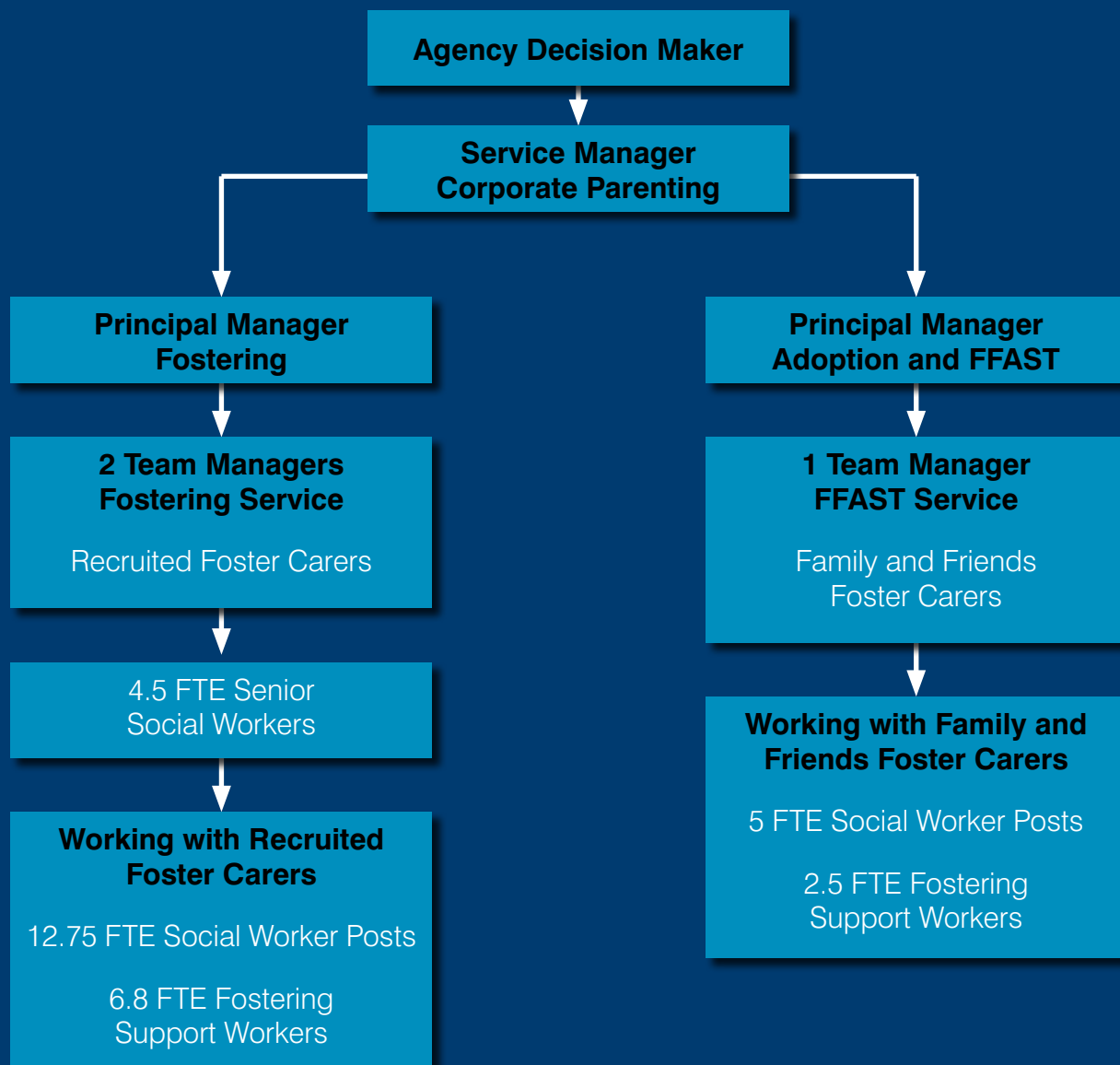
7.2 Debbie Needham is the named Fostering Manager.

Debbie is a fully qualified Social Worker with a degree in Social Sciences and holds the CQSW, and an NVQ 5 Diploma in Management. She has many years of experience working with children and families in several Local Authorities and a Voluntary Agency in the North West of England, both as a Social Worker and in a variety of management posts.



8. Structure

- 8.1** The Fostering Teams are located in the Targeted Services branch of the People’s Directorate. The Fostering Service operates as a specialist borough wide service. Working practices have been developed to enable the team to deliver services effectively to the three locality areas within Wigan, in line with Wigan Council plans and priorities.
- 8.2** The teams provide a service both to Recruited Foster Carers and to Family and Friends (or connected persons) Foster Carers.
- 8.3** There are two Principal Managers responsible for the fostering service. One who has overall responsibility of the Recruited Foster Carer team and Panel and the second Principal Manager has responsibility for the Family and Friends Carers, along with other connected persons carers, working with FFAST (Family Friends Assessment Support team).
- 8.4** There are three team Managers. Two Managers share responsibility for the service provided to Recruited Foster Carers and one Manager for the Family and Friends Foster Carers. The Team Managers are assisted in managing their part of the service by 4 full time and 1 part time Senior Social Workers. They each manage social work and support staff who specialise in offering a service to one of these groups of foster carers.



9. Staff: Names, Role, Qualifications and Experience

Lisa Young

Principal Fostering Manager

- DipSW 2002, PQ1, Practice Educator Award 2014

Lisa initially worked within a Local Authority Family Support team, before moving to the NSPCC for 5 years where she worked therapeutically with families, including working on a specialist Attachment Service and also within a service for children and young people who sexually harm. Lisa also worked on the Independent Assessment Team, providing specialist assessments to the courts.

Following this Lisa worked for an independent Fostering Agency for 5 years, becoming the Deputy Team Manager after 12 months then managing the team for over 2 years. In 2014 Lisa Joined Wigan council as Principal Manager for WWiSH adoption service, before moving over to the Fostering service in August 2016.

Janette Clarke

Principal Manager

- CQSW and BA in Applied Social Studies 1985
- Certificate in Family Placement 1993
- Certificate in Management 2009

Janette has worked within local authority child care since she started her career in 1985. She was a social worker within frontline services dealing with children on CP plans, children looked after and children in need until 1998. Janette was then an IRO for 12 months before becoming a team manager equivalent in 1999. Janette worked as a team manager through the implementation of the framework for assessment and managed both initial assessment and family support teams. She then managed a fostering team and an adoption team from 2005 to 2007. Janette then returned to managing child care teams primarily managing children within care proceedings who required permanent outcomes. The above roles were all within one local authority. Janette then moved to Wigan Council in 2015 as Principal Manager having overall responsibility for children with care plans of adoption and children placed with family and friends carers or subject to special guardianship orders.

Megan Astley

Recruited Fostering Team Manager

- BA Hons Urban Policy & Race Relations 1994
- Post Grad DipSW 1997

Experience in Youth Work, Education & Residential Child Care. Joined Fostering Service in 2012 from Pupil Referral Service.

Megan has worked with children and families in a number of fields for 25 years.

She has worked for Wigan Fostering Service since 2012 and worked as a supervising social worker, senior social worker and for the last 12 months as team manager.

Julie Clough

Recruited Fostering Team Manager

NNEB/ Cache diploma in child care and education 1988. Dipsw social work 2004

Diploma Systemic supervision 2016. 30 years' experience in children's services in a variety of roles including child protection education, residential and early years. Frontline child protection social worker 2004 to 2009. Joined the fostering team in January 2009

Emma Helps

Practice Manager - Family and Friends Assessment and Support Team

Emma has worked for over 8 years in the field of Child Protection, and has worked on a variety of teams including Duty and Assessment, Child In Need and Court and Child Protection. Emma has worked for Wigan since 2008. Emma has substantial experience of working in the court arena, completing assessments and making recommendations for the long term care of children and young people. In 2014 Emma moved to the Family and Friends Fostering team as a Senior Social Worker and became the Practice Manager in June 2015.

Kath Clark

Senior Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Part time)

- CQSW 1978.

Over 30 years as a Social Worker in Children and Families and Community work. Joined the Family placement team in (now the Fostering team) December 2005 and employed as Senior from 26.07.2010.

Carol Alker

Senior Social Worker - Recruited (Full time)

- BA Hons Social work 2008.

Previous experience in Liverpool Youth Work and Safeguarding & children and families team. Worked for Fostering Solutions as SSW and practice educator for 5 years before moving to Wigan Fostering Service in February 2014.

Marcus Hickson

Senior Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- MA Social Work 2012
- NVQ 4 Care
- NVQ 2 Management

Previously worked for 2 years in Wigan's CIN Duty Team and 7 years as Deputy Manager within a children's residential home.

David Noonan

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full Time)

- BA Social Work 2010.

Family Placement since June 2011. Worked in Wigan for over 15 years. 9 years Care Leavers Team. 5 years Family Support/Residential. Previous Recruited Foster Carer for Wigan.

Julie Smith

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Dip SW 2002
- NVQ4 in Management
- NVQ Assessor

3 years with adults with severe disabilities. Over 23 years experience with children and families. Family Placement since June 2006

Katie Ashmore

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Katie attained a BA (Hons) degree in Social work in 2011.

She has been employed by Wigan Council within the Fostering team as a social worker since 14th February 2015. Prior to this she worked as a Social Worker within Locality team 1, Child in Need, Child Protection and CLA court proceedings.

Sarah Lucas

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Part time)

- BA Social Policy 1996
- MA Dip SW 2001

Worked in Family Placement since July 2004. Experience in children and Families social work 2001-2004.

Kim Curless

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Dip SW 2000
- Graduate Certificate in Management 2004
- Post Graduate Certificate in Management 2005
- Graduate Certificate in Counselling 2011

Joined Fostering Service 2010. Worked in Wigan since 1993.

Emma Birchall Lavender

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Dip SW qualified 2010

Previously a support worker in the team

Jean Lowe

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Dip SW qualified 2010

Previously a support worker in a Locality social work team

Sharon Gaskell

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Part time)

- B.A Social Sciences 1985
- C.Q.S.W, Post Graduate certificate in Social Work 1990.

Experience in Community work, Probation Service, Residential Child Care, Social Worker Children and families team, Family Placement/ Short Break Service since 1998

Victoria Thomson

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Part time)

- Bsc/ Msc Psychology
- 1998 Dip SW / MA

Experience in Learning disabilities , Youth Offending Support work, Children and Families, Mental Health, Intermediate Care, With Fostering Team since October 2013

Justine Kelly

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- BA Hons Social Ethics & Youth & community Studies.
- DipSW 1997

Best Interest Assessor 2013

Experience in Residential care – children with Disabilities.

Education Welfare - Social Worker

Young Peoples Drug & Alcohol Team – Senior

Hospital Social Worker – Older people.

Joined Recruited Fostering in October 2013

Linda Smith

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- NVQ3

Over 20 years experience in children and families worked in fostering since June 2003

Melanie Smith

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Part time)

- NVQ3 Children and Young people

Over 26 years experience working with Children and Families in various residential settings. In present post since 2004.

Annette Davis

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- NVQ 3 & 4 Health and Social Care Appointed August 2011

Over 5 years experience working in Social Care

Janice Corner

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- NNEB and HLTA.

Over 30 years working for Wigan Council - experience in Education and Social Care.

Appointed November 2011.

Tony Wilkinson

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- PTLLS Level 4
- Youth work NVQ 3
- Bela NVQ 3.

Over 0 years experience working with children and families.

Angela Coombes

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- NVQ 3 Health & Social Care
- NVQ 4 Working with Families with Multiple complex needs.

Experienced in working within child protection teams. Working with children and families, in children's centers also in various Residential settings

Karen Goodwill

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- National Certificate in Business and Finance
- Higher National Certificate in Business and Finance
- Certificate in Management (Institute of Management Foundation)
- Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Concepts
- NVQ Level 3 in Learning, Development and Support Services for Children, Young People and Those who care for them (supporting young People)

Over 10 years experience of working with children and families

Sam Carey

Fostering Support Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full time)

- N.N.E.B. and BA (HONS) Social Work 2014.

25 years experience working with children and families, including 8 years on children's duty team. Over 13 years working for Wigan Council. Qualified 2014 as a social Worker

Rosa Aydin

Social Worker - FFAST (Full time)

- Rosa gained the BA (Hons) in Social Work Studies 2008.

She commenced employment with Wigan Council in June 2008. During this time she has worked as a social worker in three different teams, currently employed as a social worker within the Family & Friends Assessment & Support Team since March 2015. Prior to this Rosa worked as a social worker on the Social Work Duty Team based at Ince Town Hall, from the period February 2012 to March 2015. Rosa was also employed on a locality Team from the period June 2008 to February 2012.

Lauren Bagshaw

Social Worker - FFAST (Full time)

- BA Hons in Combined studies 1994
- DipSW 2006

Previous experience in adults services. Joined the fostering team October 2013.

Jo Redding

Social Worker - FFAST(Full time)

- Dip SW joined team in 2010

Previous experience in a childcare fieldwork team.

Susan Sheridan

Fostering Support Worker - FFAST (Full time)

- NVQ 3 Childcare and Education

Over 10 years experience of working with children and families. In PST since Jan 2003.

Carron Evans

Fostering Support Worker - FFAST (Full time)

- NVQ level 3 Children and Young people 2004
- BA hon's Social work 2014

5 years experience working with children and families. In Fostering team since February 2006

Melanie Murphy

Support Worker - FFAST (Full time)

- NNEB qualified in 1999

Over 13yrs working for Wigan Council. Working with Children and Families in a range of settings

Sue Rostron

Support Worker - FFAST (Part time)

- NNEB 1976
- I.S.C.S.C

Post Qualification Special Needs.

Over 38 years working for Wigan Council.

Education/Social Care

Working with Children & Families in a range of settings.

Michelle White

Financial support assessment Officer (full time)

13 years working for Wigan council with 1 year assessing Special Guardianship Orders, Child Arrangement Orders and Adoption Allowances.

Leigh Owen

Social Worker - FFAST (Part Time)

- BA Hons Social Work 2013

6 years' experience working with children, families, adults and mental health teams. Specialised experience working within domestic abuse, mother and baby unit and tenancy support

Dawn Bancroft

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering Team (Full time)

- Step Up to Social Work Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip with Merit) 2015.
- BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice, 2012.
- Access to HE Diploma Youth and Community Work, 2009.

15 years of experience working within the Criminal Justice arena and Welfare System. Experience gained within both public and private sectors supervising and supporting adults, young people, teenage parents, children and families.

Laura Williams

Social Worker - Recruited Fostering (Full Time)

Laura has worked with Children and their families for 14 years. During this time she has gained experience working with young people with complex needs, vulnerable adults and mental health teams. Laura qualified as a social worker with a BA HONS in social work in 2010. She has experience in working within a frontline child protection team involving care planning for young people on child protection plans, CIN plan, pre and post proceedings.



10. Services and procedures and processes for recruiting, approving, training, supporting and reviewing Foster Carers.

10.1 Recruitment of Foster Carers

The Recruited Fostering Team Managers have the overall responsibility for the recruitment of Foster Carers and one of the Senior social workers has specific responsibility for the recruitment and assessment of prospective carers and promoting the fostering service.

Recruitment campaigns aim to provide both a realistic and positive portrayal of foster care and designed to generate relevant and quality responses.

Recruitment Activity includes:

- Recruitment stands and attendance at local events to raise profile of fostering and give out literature to advertise fostering and encourage applications.
- Large advertisement campaign including billboards and buses (as part of the You Can Foster campaign).
- Local radio supporting national campaigns such as Foster Care Fortnight and inviting foster carers to be interviewed on air in order to give a local flavor.
- WLCT Radio runs fostering adverts in all Wigan council leisure facilities hourly.
- Information Evenings and Coffee Drop-In Mornings held monthly to provide an opportunity for potential applicants to meet supervising social workers face-to-face and find out more about fostering role in Wigan.
- Liaison with Wigan's Media & Communications Team to support advertising campaigns and raise the profile of fostering.
- Fostering website – we are currently updating this site to offer information on fostering in an engaging way; to answer frequently asked questions and to encourage anyone to register their interest by way of a simple email to our Senior Recruitment Officer.
- Regional & National Recruitment Campaigns – Wigan are part of these recruitment campaigns and the aim is to encourage people to foster for local authorities rather than independent fostering agencies. The campaign includes regional TV advertisements during popular programs such as the ITV news.
- Making use of internal communications to promote fostering within the council, such as fostering banners attached to staff emails.
- Forging links with other services in the borough such as residential settings, schools and charitable groups, so as to deliver recruitment presentations and attract applicants who already have relevant experience and transferable skills. This is in line with the 'The Deal' principle – 'Work with colleagues across the council to achieve the best outcomes in a seamless way'.
- Utilising our existing assets and involving foster carers more in recruitment activities, for example, in the delivery of recruitment presentations. Foster Carers also receive a financial reward for referring a friend to the service (upon their successful approval).

- Modernising our current application process, including webpage and paper forms, so as to make explicitly clear the benefits of fostering for Wigan council as opposed to a fostering agency. This will be done in line with the values set out in 'The Deal'.
- Fostering banners are displayed periodically across the borough in line with service demands.
- Fostering recruitment posters and leaflets are frequently distributed in the community, such as GP waiting rooms, train stations and community hubs.
- Information about fostering is frequently displayed on the councils Social media channels. This includes case studies of young people and carers so as to celebrate their achievements and promote the fostering service.

The team has dedicated Social Workers who focus solely on the recruitment and assessment of Foster Carers. This change was implemented to ensure assessments are completed in a timely manner by Social Workers who work for Wigan Fostering team, therefore know the service well. This has ensured that the average timescale for the completion of the assessments is within 6 months.

10.2 Assessment and Support of Family and Friends Foster Carers

The service to connected persons and Family and Friends Carers is called FFAST, which stands for Family Friends Assessment and Support Team. It is managed by a dedicated Team Manager. Assessments are carried out by the qualified staff working specifically with this group of carers. There are clear procedures in relation to Family Friends Carers which mirror those in place for Recruited Foster Carers

10.3 Assessment and approval of Foster Carers

- All applicants are assessed by qualified Social Workers, under the supervision of a senior or Team Manager who is experienced in the work of the Fostering Service.
- Consent of applicants and any member of the household over 18 years of age is obtained for checks to be undertaken.
- Applicants are required to provide references and have a full medical examination by their GP, whose report is made available to the agency medical advisor for comments.
- Contact will be made with applicant's ex-partners and adult children where relevant so that appropriate interviews can take place.
- Where applicants have children, contact will be made with schools.
- During Stage 2 of the assessment of each applicant's child care experience and skills and their social and environmental background are explored in depth with their assessing Social Worker.
- To better prepare applicants for the fostering role, and in accordance with NMS 13.3, additional activities have been included in the assessment process. These include shadow days with existing carers who then get a chance to comment on the applicants, as well as an interview panel delivered by young people in our care. Therefore young people get an opportunity to comment on the types of people they think should become foster carers.
- Wigan Fostering service has been using Fostering Network 'Skills to Foster' Assessment report for assessments since 2011,
- Applicant's assessments are presented to the Fostering Panel which is chaired independently by an experienced and suitably qualified Chair.
- Applicants are invited to attend the Fostering Panel but this is not mandatory.
- There are procedures for applicants to appeal against decisions and information relating to the Independent Review Mechanism is made available as appropriate.

10.4 Pre-approved training of Foster Carers

Recruitment activity and pre-approval training courses are planned to occur so as to reduce delay between stages.

The fostering team delivers pre-approval training using Fostering Network's Skills to Foster training model. There are approximately 12 training sessions annually and each one is delivered by a fully qualified Social Worker assisted by a Support Worker and an experienced Foster Carer. We have also started to have a young person who is looked after attend the course, where possible, to share their views and opinions on being a child in foster care. . This training has been further developed by a young persons support group within the council who have now gone on to design and deliver a workshop to new fostering applicants.

The process is as follows:

- Prior to training the applicants will have attended an information evening.
- An initial home visit is made by a qualified social worker.
- Attendance at pre-approval training is mandatory for all applicants.
- Applicants in partnership may attend groups separately due to child care or working commitments.
- Applicants complete an evaluation which contributes to their assessment and portfolio of evidence.

10.5 Post Approval Training

Following approval all recruited Foster Carers are allocated a place on the TDS induction programme and are required to complete the course based on the National Minimum Standards within their first year of approval.

In Wigan this is facilitated by the attendance at a series of workshops in which Foster Carers are supported by fostering staff to work on each areas of competency and develop their evidence portfolio and action plans to complete the work required.

There is an extensive training programme available to all Foster Carers which is reviewed each year and Foster Carers are nominated for appropriate courses by their supervising social workers as identified during their Foster Carer review.

We currently provide training in the following areas:

CORE SAFEGUARDING E-LEARNING

- Child Accident Prevention
- Domestic Abuse
- E-Safety
- Information Sharing
- Keeping Them Safe Protecting Children from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Safeguarding Children Foundation (Level 2) and Core (Level 3 Part 1)
- Safeguarding Sleeping for Babies - Reducing the Risk of SIDS

CORE TRAINING – FACE TO FACE

- TSD Training
- The Incredible Years
- Attachment
- Bespoke Training from the Health Team
- Building resilience in Young People
- Children’s Advocacy/Safeguarding in Young People
- Child Trafficking
- Domestic Violence
- Education Training
- Key Skills for Learning
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- Safeguarding Children from Sexual Abuse
- Skills for Learning
- Supporting Behaviour for Children with Complex Learning Needs
- Surviving Christmas
- Think You Know (Protecting children and young people)
- Autism
- ADHD
- Safe Sleep
- Infant Feeding
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Triple P for 0-8years
- Adolescent Mental Health
- Moving On
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Triple P for Teenage Years (9+)
- Y6 SATS Education
- Y10 Education
- Y11 Education
- Drug and alcohol training
- Caring for Unaccompanied Children and Young People 10.6 Supervision & Support of Foster Carers

Every Foster Carer is allocated a Supervising Social Worker. The role of the Supervising Social Worker, alongside our team of support workers, is to provide a range of services directly to Foster Carers which help to promote greater stability of placements for Looked after Children. They do this by:

- Ensuring that the Foster Care Agreement is understood and signed and dated.
- Ensuring the Foster Carer receives a post approval pack.
- Ensuring that the Foster Carer has essential equipment.
- Completing regular supervisory visits
- Co-ordinate the introduction and placing of children.
- Follow up Foster Carer nominations for courses to ensure attendance.
- Undertaking at least one unannounced visit annually.
- Attending Children Looked After reviews.
- Completing Foster Carer reviews.
- Providing an advice and support for Foster Carers
- Support workers can offer additional visits and telephone calls.
- All Foster Carers have a support plan in place which meets their needs and is subject to review as appropriate (at least annually).
- Support workers can complete direct work with children and young people and Foster Carers.
- Fostering support workers facilitate our Foster Carer support groups across the borough, which provide additional information to the carers and an opportunity for them to extend their network.
- Information is provided regarding young people's activities available outside the foster home.

10.7 Consultation with Foster Carers

In addition to our Foster Carer support group and a regular newsletter consultation takes place with Foster Carers when changes and developments are planned. The most recent Consultation event was in November 2016 and consultations have resulted in changes to policy and procedure such as finance allowances and training programmes. The service remains committed to ensuring carers have a say in the development of the service.

10.8 Referral of children for placements, including emergency and temporary placements

The Agency Decision Maker is responsible for agreeing the Regulation 24 Placement in respect connected persons (a designated Service Manager deputies in their absence). Requests for emergency placement for recruited carers are made to the Fostering Service through the duty officer and agreed by the duty manager or Senior.

The duty manager in the Fostering Team co-ordinates the following:

- Duty Rota provided by staff in the recruited fostering team
- Taking of referrals from social workers on departmental referral form.
- Ensuring that Team Manager/Service Manager or Legal Gateway Panel have approved request for accommodation.

- Ensuring that a risk assessment has been completed and shared with prospective Foster Carers.
- Matching of children with Foster Carers.
- Keeping record of placements requested and placements made to inform planning.
- Ensuring child's social worker is a given copy of the Children's Guide and the Foster Carer profile to give to the child.
- Ensuring introductory visits take place when possible.
- Ensuring placement planning meetings take place.
- Ensuring essential LAC information is given to carers.
- Chairing Placement Planning meetings.
- Ensuring that the duty officer gives Emergency Out of Hours service an up-dated list of Foster Carer vacancies at 4pm with any information regarding matching factors.

11. Promoting children's health, emotional development, education and leisure

Foster families are provided with pre and post approval preparation and training on the importance of and availability of health, education and leisure services to help children achieve their full potential and enhance their emotional wellbeing.

11.1 Health

Children in Foster Care have regular health assessments and Wigan has dedicated named nurses and a doctor to provide a range of additional services and support for children and young people looked after in Wigan.

The team act as health advocates for each child who is looked after and assist in the referral process to specialist services along with the commissioning of targeted services to ensure health needs are met. They are responsible for ensuring that children in care are able to access routine holistic health assessments at timely intervals through joint working arrangements.

The Foster Carer review records details of how carers have met the child's health needs as identified in the child's care plan. The Fostering service training programme also provides a range of courses to support foster carers in promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of health issues. The courses are well attended and have received excellent feedback.

11.2 Emotional wellbeing

Looked after children have access to clinical psychology and related services through CAMHS via the Single Point of Access and have priority status within the CAMHS system. The clinical support would be based upon the outcome of the assessment and includes consultation with professional, direct work through to psychiatry.

11.3 Education

Foster Carers promote and support children's educational attainment. This is monitored through supervisory visits and the foster carer review process. Training is provided and they are expected to make sure the child attends school regularly, contribute to the child's personal education plan, maintain contact with school, attend parent's meetings, and ensure any barriers to educational attainment are identified and addressed.

There is a Virtual School team in Wigan dedicated to meeting the needs of looked after children and young people. The team works specifically with looked after children to support their education via monitoring, supporting and challenging schools, social workers and carers to break down barriers to education for children who are looked after.

This work consists of attending meetings, creating effective education planning through PEP's, offering training to skill up staff working directly within schools, monitoring and supporting regular attendance and providing direct work with children.

Every authority in England has a statutory duty to monitor, support and challenge education decisions regarding children looked after by that authority. In 2014 the role of the Virtual School head also became statutory and ensured one person was given responsibility for this role.

The Virtual School has a population of school age children, a staff who support those children but no school building. Children looked after by Wigan are educated in schools all over the country.

In Wigan the Virtual School Team consists of;

- A head teacher
- A primary teacher
- A senior secondary worker
- 12 education support workers
- An administrative officer.

The virtual School also commission additional support from Targeted Education Support Service and Education Psychology Service to ensure those children who require urgent assessments to improve education outcomes can have timely assessment and intervention.

The Virtual School sends a newsletter out to all Children Looked After twice a year. This is to ensure children understand who is available to help with their education and encourage them to have their say regarding decisions made on their behalf.

National Policy is that all Children Looked After attend a 'Good or Outstanding' school. For this reason the Virtual School will challenge decisions made that contradict this policy.

The Virtual School Team focus on attendance, attainment and progress for all Children Looked After regardless of where they are educated.

11.4 Leisure

All Looked After Children have free access to Wigan's leisure services. Foster Carers are encouraged to support children's hobbies and interests and promote their participation in leisure activities. They may apply for additional payments to support children's hobbies and interests.

The Foster Carers support group also organises an annual Christmas party and activities for foster families through the year.

11.5 Engagement with children and young people

Children and young people in Foster Care are encouraged and assisted to provide feedback to their foster carer's review each year. This is seen by panel members and fostering managers and action is taken to address any issues raised.

The Voices and Engagement Team in Wigan also undertakes significant consultation activity with looked after children and offer Junior and Senior groups for children and young people to attend.

Wigan's Fostering Service values the knowledge, skills and expertise of the young people in our care. In line with the council's wider asset based model of working, the Fostering Service has ensured children and young people are active participants, rather than passive recipients. One way we have done this is to involve young people from the Voice and Engagement Team, and the Leaving Care Council in the training and development of Foster Carers. It is hoped that this will work two fold, in that targeted services will be introduced and promoted to potential carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as giving fostering applicants an opportunity to meet and interact with some of our young people under our supervision and care.

We believe this will better prepare applicants for the fostering task as well as providing additional task centred evidence to assist the social work assessor when making their recommendation. Added to this, we also hope that the process will help to de-mystify some of the stigma that can surround children in care and give a true representation of them as individuals. More importantly than this however is that the young people get an opportunity and a genuine 'voice' in our recruitment process, a chance to offer their views on the type of people they would like to be caring for themselves and others.

In addition to the above, the Fostering Service work alongside the Voices for Choices team and other services in the planning of an annual celebration event which recognises and rewards some of the outstanding achievements of young people in our care. Last year over 100 young people took part in the event which was also supported by a number of community businesses.



12. Compliments, comments and Complaints

If a compliment, comment or complaint about the service is received, it is the responsibility of the Team Manager of the relevant team to try to put right any concerns raised by service users.

If a complaint cannot be resolved at this first stage, it may become necessary for the complaint to be formally registered with the

Complaints & Quality Standards Team (Social Care), Wigan Council, Resources Directorate, PO Box 100, WN1 3DS. Telephone 01942 486175

Alternatively a complaint form can be completed online.

A copy of the leaflet setting out how to make a complaint is made available to applicants during their assessment.

If a child or young person makes a complaint about services provided for them, then the Children's complaints procedure is followed. All children and young people can access an advocate via the Children's Rights Service. The Children's Rights Service will support children and young people in making complaints on their behalf and support them throughout the process of getting a solution.

Their contact details are;

Voices For Choices

Telephone 091942 487071

Voiceandengagement@wigan.gov.uk

View our Children's social care complaints factsheet for more information.

Alternatively direct contact can be made with the Complaints & Quality Standards Team (Social Care), Wigan Council, Resources Directorate, PO Box 100, WN1 3DS. Telephone 01942 486175

13. Arrangements for approval and review of statement of purpose

This statement of purpose is reviewed within the fostering service in consultation with staff, Foster Carers and fostering panel on a regular basis. It is formally submitted to the Executive on an annual basis. A copy will be provided to OFSTED as requested.

13.1 Arrangements for distribution of Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose is part of the post approval pack for new Foster Carers.

It is available upon request to:-

- Any person working for the purposes of the fostering service.
- Any foster carer or prospective Foster Carer of the fostering service.
- Any child placed with a Foster Carer by the fostering service.
- The parent of any such child.

The local Ofsted office responsible for inspecting our services is:

Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA, Phone: 0300 123 4666, Text: 60085, Email: enquiries@ofstead.

Our contact details

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Oaklands,
196A Newton Road,
Lowton, Warrington
WA3 2AQ

Telephone; 01942 487200