

Statement of Purpose

ideal fostering

A family team with family values





Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989;
- The Care Standards Act 2000;
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011;
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, 2011 (updated 2013)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation 3, includes:

- Statement of the Aims and Objectives of Ideal Fostering's fostering service;
- Statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

In keeping with the expectation of the National Minimum Standard 16.1 this Statement of Purpose is made available to the following:

- Foster carers approved by Ideal Fostering;
- Staff members of Ideal Fostering;
- Any social worker of a child placed with Ideal Fostering;
- A parent or person with parental responsibility of any child placed with Ideal Fostering.
- A shortened version is also made available to foster children, along with a children's guide.

Other Formats and Languages:

You may download this Statement of Purpose as a pdf document, or if you, or someone you know, needs this Statement of Purpose in another language or format please also let us know.

Please see page 9 on the agency 's response and management relating to seasonal illnesses, including Covid-19.

This Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by Ideal Fostering Agency 's Management Team whenever there is a change, and at least annually.

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About Ideal Fostering

Ideal Fostering is a family orientated fostering service with a therapeutic ethos. Ideal Fostering is committed to providing high quality, practical, emotional, and therapeutic support; and providing caring, nurturing homes for children who are unable to live with their birth families.

Ideal Fostering is committed to enabling children to achieve their potential and to develop resilience, overcoming the loss and trauma they may have experienced in the past.

Ideal Fostering recognises the complexities involved in fostering and fully acknowledges the invaluable role foster carers play in caring for children and young people.

Ideal Fostering is registered with Ofsted, and is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1989 (Company Registration No – **08606830**). Ideal Fostering is a member of Foster Talk, and all our foster carers and staff are individual members of Foster Talk too.

The company was originally founded by social worker, Bharat Pattni who first started working with children and families when he qualified in 1981. During his long career in children's social care he often became quite disillusioned at the shortage of foster carers and out of this decided to open fostering agencies. He remains at the heart of the Ideal Fostering. You will often hear him say that he is in awe of what foster carers do and how the work '*they do is beyond the capacity of words*'.







Aims and Objectives

Ideal Fostering's focus is always the child or young person in our care, and we aim to provide children and young people with a positive, safe and nurturing experience within a family environment. Ideal Fostering's key objective is to support children and young people to develop and grow within the five key outcomes areas of "Every Child Matters":

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

To support our main objective to enable children and young people to thrive, Ideal Fostering aims to provide:

- A service where children come first, in terms of our thinking and planning as well as their achievements.
- A core team of qualified, experienced and committed staff who can holistically support foster carers in the fostering task.
- Foster *homes* where children feel they belong rather than *placements* in a care system;
- Foster carers who are fully prepared, supported, supervised and trained in their role;
- Foster homes which provide stability and security to children;
- Foster homes which promote a child's positive sense of their own identity - including their culture, religion and ethnicity – respecting the child's origins in every aspect of the care provided;
- Foster homes which promote contact when appropriate for the foster child;
- Foster homes which help the foster child make sense of their past;
- Foster homes which actively promote the child's education and learning, including celebrating their hobbies and talents;
- Foster homes which actively promote the child's health, including mental health;
- Foster homes which help children understand and manage risks for themselves;
- Foster homes which actively prepare the young person for adulthood, at a pace and style that the young person can absorb;
- Foster homes which are carefully matched with the needs of the child;
- Foster homes which children leave, whenever possible, in a planned way or, when this is not possible, which help foster children to understand why they had to leave unexpectedly;







Aims and Objectives

- Social Worker supervision that takes a robust approach to poor practice, challenging foster carers to provide the high quality care that children deserve;
- A service which takes its safeguarding seriously, both in terms of the recruitment of foster carers and staff and also in terms of involving statutory agencies appropriately when issues of concern come to light;
- A collaborative approach to care planning with the responsible authority, supporting the development of an up-to-date and child-focussed care plan for each child, ensuring a clear pathway to permanence is achieved as quickly as possible.

Ideal Fostering seek to deliver on its aims by:

- Having a therapeutic approach underpinning the service.
- Supporting children to engage in developing important life skills through education and socially constructive opportunities.
- Ensuring children and young people benefit from the support and encouragement they receive to achieve a more stable, secure and resilient developmental path to adulthood.
- Striving to deliver long term stability through therapeutic fostering.
- Recruiting and retaining individuals/families with the skillset and desire to deliver therapeutic fostering and a commitment to working in partnership with Ideal Fostering.
- Working with Local Authorities to achieve the best outcomes for each child in relation to health and wellbeing, education and skills and preparedness for adulthood.
- Advocating for each child in relation to meeting their needs and supporting their aspirations.
- Promoting safer caring through robust policies & procedures, quality training, partnership working with other professionals and the use of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).'
- Ensuring that foster carers have an easily accessible support structure that is professional and provides additional resources as necessary to support the foster placements.
- Respecting and promoting the rights of each individual irrespective of their race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, ability, religion, and linguistic background and to challenge any discriminatory practice.
- Commitment to the professional development of both staff and foster carers by providing training which equips them in their role.
- Continually maintaining, reviewing and updating policies and procedures to comply with legislative and statutory requirements and good practice.







Standards of care required by Ideal Fostering Agency

Caring For Children and Young People:

Our vision is to strive for longevity and permanency in placements, recognising that stability is fundamental to effectively supporting children and young people - unless the plan is for them to return home. This is achieved through stringent matching; ensuring children are matched with a foster family capable of meeting their needs. Our commitment to working in close partnership with all agencies involved in children's care will ensure care planning is rigorous and that each child is fully supported.

We accept the following placement types:

- Emergency
- Short term
- Long term
- Respite
- Solo placements
- Sibling group placements
- Parent and Child placements
- Step-down from residential placements
- Children with Additional Needs and Unaccompanied Young People

We also provide the following services:

- Psychotherapist and therapeutic services
- In house Medical Advisor, background as an experienced GP
- Educational support
- Peer / Buddy Support and Out of Hours Support (24/7, 365 days)

Children and Young People's Participation in the Service

We are committed to ensuring children and young people's voices are heard and that their views are taken into account when decisions are made about them. We are passionate about involving our young people in the development of our service and we seek to ascertain their views in the following ways:

- Annual Feedback Forms
- During a Foster Carers review of approval.
- Social activities and participation groups—including the recruitment of new agency staff.
- Social Worker / Support Worker Visits
- Unannounced visits
- Reviews/ Personal Education Plan Meetings







Safeguarding Children

Ideal Fostering's Safeguarding Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any child protection matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and the Registered Manager. The overriding aim is to ensure the protection of children/young people.

The Registered Manager and DSL will seek to ascertain accurate details of any allegation and will determine a plan of action in which to liaise with the child's placing authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer and the area authority in which the foster carer(s) reside.
A joint decision will be made about whether there is a need for further safeguarding action in respect to protecting the child or children.

Within Ideal Fostering there are 4 DSL's, and a Safeguarding Advisor all whom work together to ensure the best action is taken in respect of concerns, complaints or allegations, and that practice decisions are consistent. There is always an identified DSL available to manage any matters which may arise—during both office hours and out of hours.

As a preventative measure, stringent checks are completed prior to foster carer's approval and employment of all staff, and updated within legislative timescales. *For full details please request a copy of our Safeguarding Policy.*

The agency's DSL's are:

- Emily Evans (Registered Manager)
- Reginald Manning
- Latoya Smith
- Rebecca Hupperdine

In addition, Bharat Pattni is a Safeguarding Advisor for the agency, available 24/7 and able to offer any advice to all staff, including DSL's as required.







Standards of care required of Ideal Fostering Agency

Foster Carers:

Ideal Fostering believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship and recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances. We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children and young people in care. Ideal Fostering will:

- Value foster carers' skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals.
- Recognise that foster carers are the people who live with the children and young people every day and know them best.
- Wherever possible, include foster carers in all meetings that affect them and the children/ young people that they care for.
- Treat foster carers without discrimination and respect them as colleagues.
- Respect confidentiality.

Support:

Whilst fostering can greatly enrich the lives of families, it is also recognised that it can at times be an isolating and challenging task. We aim to ensure the most appropriate and timely support is always provided. We will provide for all our foster families:

- A named, experienced and qualified Supervising Social Worker offering frequent supervision and phone contact.
- Around the clock 24-hour, 365 days expert duty support for all foster carers.
- Regular support groups where foster carers can network and share experiences with
- other fostering families.
- High quality training and support to enable foster carers to achieve the Training Support and Development Standards.
- Support at meetings.
- Support from our Therapeutic Support team including a Psychotherapist, who is a Registered Member of the British Association of Psychotherapists.
- Access to our in house medical advisor with a background as an experienced General Practitioner.
- Support from our designated Education Support Officer.
- The offer of peer / buddy support for new carers and those experiencing allegations.
- Social events for all the family throughout each year.
- Private log-in to the online platform 'The Training Hub' for quick and immediate access to quality training and upskilling information..
- Honest and open feedback to foster carers enabling effective partnership working.







Standards of care required of Ideal Fostering Agency

Support continued...

- Full pay for up to 14 nights respite each year.
- Individual Membership to Foster Talk.
- A comprehensive set of policies and procedures, and an induction to ensure these are effectively understood.

Foster Carer Reviews:

All foster carers have an annual review to reflect on the previous year. This process looks at feedback from carers and birth children, involved professionals and children/young people.

New goals are then set for the year ahead, training needs are also discussed and any other recommendations are made.

Record Keeping:

Foster carers are expected to record regular logs for the children in their care. These logs are then reviewed by the supervising social worker. Recording is an essential part of a foster carer's role which helps to monitor the child's journey.

Policies and Procedures:

All our foster carers have access to the foster carer's handbook which has the key policies and procedures along with useful guidance, these can be accessed via a physical copy or online via CHARMS.







Learning and Development

Ideal Fostering consider training and support as essential to equip staff and foster carers with the knowledge and skills they need to offer effective and therapeutic foster care in order that they can help transform the lives of the children/young people that they foster.

The agency provides a statutory and mandatory training package for all. All foster carers will be fully supported to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards portfolio within the legislated timescales; and there is a designated support officer available to all foster carers to provide assistance in this area on a group or 1:1 basis.

Compulsory training within the first 12 months of approval, and to be updated every 3 years, is as follows:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Emergency First Aid
- Breakaway and Safeholding Techniques
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Allegations and Safer Care
- Administration of Medication

In addition, we offer a wide variety of other courses to help support our foster carers to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Staff employed by Ideal Fostering, including panel members and independent assessors are all encouraged to attend at least one annual staff training day each year. All staff are requested to complete Safeguarding & Child Protection training and to update this at a minimum of every three years. All staff are also given training in GDPR. Supervising Social Workers and Therapeutic staff are also asked to attend training on Therapeutic Fostering to help ensure these practices are a regular part of the fostering experience with our carers.

Supervision and appraisals are offered to all staff, independent assessors, and panel members regularly which may identify further training needs - similar to the foster carer annual review process.

Ideal Fostering enjoys a diversity of staff and some of the staff are family members. To ensure that conflict of interest does not compromise our practice, no family member supervises each other. We have in place an experienced senior independent social work professional who supervises members of the family and who has been safer recruited in line with agency requirement.
This independent consultant will further lead in any areas/ investigations of grievance should a potential concern of conflict of interest arise.
For full details please request a copy of our Grievance or/and Conflict of Interest Policy.







Health Advice / Staying Safe

Ideal Fostering follows Government Advice relating to seasonal illnesses, including pandemics ensuring best practice and support is adhered to. This is to ensure the welfare of children, foster carers, staff and all other related parties.

For optimal safety for everyone, following the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain cautious and have retained the learning gained during that unprecedented time which we also apply to other seasonal Illnesses, for example influenza:

Current measures include (but are not limited to):

- Use of alcohol hand gel—dispensers are located at key areas in the office such as the main entrance lobby with a large hands-free dispenser with an allocated member of staff to ensure it is refilled when necessary.
- Vaccinations have been supported and promoted for all staff, foster carers and young persons (where relevant).
- Training courses, panel meetings, events and support groups continue being held face to face and virtually.
- Foster carer visits whilst they are being held face to face – if appropriate may be occasionally held virtually.
- Working from home for staff is continuing with a hybrid working approach between home and
- office.
- Most staff meetings are held face-face—consideration is however taken about air circulation and the distance individuals are seated.

Legal Advice

If foster carers, children or other parties have any questions or concerns, please do contact us.

The agency has an in-house legal adviser who provides general legal advice to the agency, particularly in relation to HR matters and data protection.





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Recruitment and Assessment

Ideal Fostering have an on-going programme of recruitment, predominantly using word of mouth. 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 can demonstrate the key skills needed to holistically meet the needs of looked after children and young people.

Ideal Fostering will expect applicants to have:

- A spare bedroom
- Plenty of physical and emotional stamina
- A commitment to attend training events and support groups
- Availability to promote contact and offer supervision
- A willingness to support a child's/young person's attendance for therapy, hospital appointment etc- including the provision of transport where necessary
- If living with a partner/ spouse, the relationship should be established and secure

Our assessment and approval process fully complies with the Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations. Volume 4: Fostering Services July 2013.

Following a successful initial visit by the fostering agency, and an agreement of initial suitability, all prospective carers are required to attend preparation groups, known as the Skills to Foster course. Alongside these three sessions, a variety of techniques will be used to gather evidence or information regarding the applicants suitability to foster. The information gathered will then be composed into the Form F Assessment and presented to the agency's fostering panel. Techniques used to gather information for fostering suitability may include:

- The CoramBAAF Form F guidance and competencies list to assist applicants and assessors to work out what existing skills they already possess and what new ones they need to acquire.
- Ecomaps, family trees and/or other personal history tools to gain information on an applicant's motivation to foster and how their past history may impact on future fostering.
- References / witness statements from other adults who can corroborate the applicant's ability to relate to and care for children.
- Discussions.
- Records and reports
- Case studies
- Observations from the "Skills to Foster" preparation course
- Shadowing other foster carers for a day, if appropriate

Care will be taken by the assessor to stand back and pay due attention to the life history of the applicant - rather than concentrating solely on the applicant's current functioning and circumstances.

The completed assessment will include a recommendation by the assessing social worker.







The independent scrutiny of the fostering panel

It is the role of the fostering panel to make recommendations about the approval status of foster carers. Each fostering panel is required to have an independent chair. Ideal Fostering is committed to ensuring that the fostering panel takes a balanced and robust approach to its independent scrutiny role, and that the panel provides independent feedback on the quality of all the reports it considers.

The Panel consists of a central list of members with a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds, relevant to fostering. New panel members are provided with an induction and annual appraisals are undertaken with all panel members. Regular training is also provided. The Fostering Panel has an independent Chair to provide an objective stance, whose professional background is within Mental Health and Social Work. Other professions and expertise of the panel include: Foster Carers, Children's Social Care, Education, Drug/ Alcohol support, Nursing and personal experience of being in foster care.

The panel also have access to the agency's independent Medical Advisor should any queries emerge during a panel meeting which require clarity. The Medical Advisor has oversight and provides comment to all medicals which take place of our foster carers and applicants.

The Panel collectively provides a key quality assurance function in relation to Ideal Fostering. Panel recommendations are passed to the Agency Decision Maker and letters are then sent out according to prescribed timescales. The Fostering Panel strongly encourages all prospective and approved foster carers to attend when their cases are being presented as, Panel believes, this symbolises the importance of partnership working. Minutes are taken of all Panel business.

Approvals:

All Ideal Fostering carers are approved via the Fostering Panel. Applicants usually attend with their assessing social worker. Panel members understand that applicants are often apprehensive about attending and do all they can to put applicants at their ease. Applicants are asked questions about their motivation to become carers and give consideration to the terms of approval most suitable for them, such as the age, gender and number of children to be placed.

Annual Household Reviews of Approval:

In addition to hearing all new fostering applications, approved foster carers' first, fifth and tenth annual reviews are also presented to the Fostering Panel. Subsequent reviews are also considered where there is a significant change to a carer's terms of approval (adding Parent and Child Placements to approval etc) or there are serious standard of care concerns and termination of approval may be being considered.







The independent scrutiny of the fostering panel

Termination of Approval:

Occasionally Ideal Fostering will form the view that the standard of care provided by a carer does not meet the required level. Depending on the severity of the issue, additional training/support may be provided in the first instance. However, the matter may be presented to the Fostering Panel. Panel will give the carer an opportunity to express their views and will consider all the information provided to it. The foster carer will be encouraged to access advice and support from Foster Talk in these circumstances.

If Panel reaches a recommendation that the carer is unsuitable, the ADM (Agency Decision Maker) forms a proposed decision (qualifying determination). If this is to terminate approval, a letter is then sent to the carer stating this and giving reasons. The foster carer then has 28 days within which to make representation to the decision maker or to apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Ideal Fostering has the following Decision Makers:

- Anoop Thomas — Operations Manager
- Lorraine Salmon







Monitoring and Evaluating the Service

Ideal Fostering has a number of systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the service, as follows:

- Supervising Social Workers, foster carers and managers receive regular supervision in order to maintain the high standards expected of carers and workers.
- A designated Quality Assurance Officer is employed to ensure that risk assessments, safer care documents, annual reviews and Form F assessments are undertaken to the highest quality. This person is an experienced Senior Practitioner in Social Work.
- Two annual unannounced visits are made to all carers.
- The Agency Decision Maker reviews all Annual Reviews completed by the fostering service for all approved foster carers.
- Feedback forms are provided to all foster carers and young people after any training/ events they attend. Annual service feedback is also sent to social workers and commissioners too.
- Quarterly review meetings take place between managers to reflect upon the number of allegations, concerns, complaints and incidents—to consider any patterns or trends which require addressing or are in need of closer oversight—including to scrutinise the actions taken and whether these were appropriate. Similarly, managers also meet monthly to review any Placement Endings—including pattern ands trends in reasons for placements ending and/or who these may be ending with. Managers further consider any outstanding gaps in newly matched placements and review the timescales for these to be closed.
- The Fostering Panel routinely ask all prospective/approved carers and social workers presenting to give feedback.
- The Fostering Panel will also provide feedback to presenting Social Workers on the quality of their assessments as part of their quality assurance role.
- On a six-monthly basis, the agency hold Panel Planning Meetings to consider alongside the Panel Chair, ADM's, and Panel Adviser how well panel is functioning as a whole.
- The agency has an Independent Consultant (also an approved and experienced social worker) who quality assures a portion ADM comments on an annual basis to consider if these remain rigorous.

Compliments and Complaints:

All comments, compliments and complaints provide vital information to inform the future policy, planning and development of the service as well as identifying the areas of the service which are successful and valued. They help to identify any gaps in service provision and should lead to the development of improved services. When something goes particularly well, or particularly badly, we need to know so that we can repeat successes and correct mistakes.







Senior Management Structure

Head of Service	Strategic management of the agency, oversight of delivery of services, director of finance and supervision of senior staff.
Registered Manager	Manages Social Work Team Managers and the Home Finding Team. Designated Safeguarding Lead for the agency.
Appointed Registered Manager	Supervises Social Worker team. Heads the Student department. Researches good practice / learning which can inform agency development. Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Responsible Individual	Oversees recruitment of foster carers, is one of the agency medical advisors; and provides support/advice as needed in any area of the agency. Oversees Policies, Procedures & Practices and is responsible to Ofsted in respect of any regulatory issues.
Operations Manager and ADM	Oversees day to day running of the agency, premises, finances and IT . Also Agency Decision Maker.
Agency Decision Maker	Agency ADM.
Team Manager and Ofsted Quality Assurance	Oversees the Support Team & Ofsted QA, including the monitoring of health and educational outcomes. Manages safer recruitment of new staff.
Team Manager	Supervises the Social Worker team. Panel Adviser. Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Team Manager	Supervises the Social Worker team. Oversees ASYE.
Home Finding Manager	Manages day to day running of the agency's home finding provision.
Assistant Training and Recruitment Manager	Training lead, supports foster carer recruitment and manages the admin team.

Date Policy Created: January 2013

Updated: January 2018, January 2019, January 2022, December 2022, April 2024, May 2025 & July 2025.

Review Date: August 2025.

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