

City Of Bradford Adoption and Fostering Unit

Fostering Services Statement of Purpose

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Introduction

The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards document, published in conjunction with the Regulations, contains a statement of the national minimum standards published by the Secretary of State under section 23(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000.

It is a requirement of The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 that a fostering service provider must compile a **Statement of Purpose** that describes the Service's aims and objectives and the services and facilities it provides.

It is a requirement that the Statement is reviewed annually, and amended as necessary, and approved by Elected Members.

The National Minimum Standards for fostering services are issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the CSA. The Secretary of State will keep the standards under review and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

1. Aims and Objectives, Principles and Standards of Care

Bradford Children and Families Service is committed to ensuring the provision of a high quality Fostering Service which guarantees the best possible standards for care, safety and protection for children or young people being looked after.

Foster Carers are expected to work actively with the children or young people in their care to promote their health, education, emotional and behavioural well being, their relationships, self care, identity and social presentation.

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring Foster Carers receive support, advice and training to enable them to offer the best possible standards of care, safety and protection for children or young people in their care.

The core principles underlying this service are those taken from The Children's Act:

- Parents are the most important people in a child's/young person's life and children/young people should be brought up in their families as far as possible.
- The Local Authority is required to provide services to families to enable children/young people to remain with their family where ever possible.
- Short break fostering schemes are provided to assist parents in caring for their children and prevent family breakdown.
- Fostering is a positive service to children/young people and their families and for most of the children who cannot remain at home it will be the first choice of placement when they become Looked After.
- It is the duty of the authority to look first for an alternative placement within a child's existing family network.
- Where a foster placement is being considered, the wishes and feelings of the child/young person, the parents or significant people must be sought and taken into consideration.
- Whether a child/young person is with the parents or not, the foster carer does not assume parental responsibility for the child.
- Parents are positively encouraged to be part of the planning process and to be actively involved in the decision making.
- Any placement must take into consideration the child/young person's religious, racial, cultural and linguistic needs.
- All placements need to take into account the requirements for the child/young person to be placed as near to the family as possible. If possible, siblings should be placed together unless their specific needs contra-indicate such a placement.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that a selected placement is suitable where a child or person has disabilities

- Work within the placement, should be focused on achieving the objectives set out in the individual Child Care Plan.
- Whilst in the placement, regular contact should be encouraged in safe surroundings, between the child/young person and their family within the terms of the individual placement agreement.
- There is an expectation of partnership between all parties in the arrangement.
- The Fostering service should actively promote consultation and participation by all its stakeholders in developing its service.

2. Description of Services Provided

The Fostering Service aims to provide a range of placements to meet the differing needs for children and young people:

2.1 Types of Fostering Schemes

- Time-limited placements (short and medium term; temporary; task-centred). This is for children and young people when they first enter care. The carers work with social workers towards helping to return the children to their families or when they cannot return home safely move them onto other permanent placements.
- Long-term foster placements for children of different ages and needs, either to provide permanent care until adulthood or to help prepare them for independence.
- Intensive (Specialist) placements for young people who are either presenting high risk behaviour and who require individual placements either because of their challenging behaviour or are themselves at severe risk. This includes those children with such complex health needs that they require individual placements or specialist help.
- Family and Friends Foster Carers (Kinship Care); these carers are approved for specific children who are known to them.
- Emergency Care (Crisis Care) offers immediate short term placements for a max of 48 hours (72hrs at the weekend) for young people aged 11+ who have no alternative accommodation.
- Short break placements for disabled children (Shared Care) provides short breaks at regular intervals to help prevent family breakdown.
- Short break placements for non disabled children (Support care) provide regular breaks in a flexible format to meet the specific needs of individual children. This is a preventative service to help reduce the likelihood of an admission to care.
- Remand care; a court may remand a young person to local authority care. In some cases their welfare needs are best met by a foster care placement.
- Private Fostering. The service provides the strategic lead, an advisory function and quality control for private fostering placements. The assessment and supervision of placements is an area team responsibility.

2.2 Number of Foster Carers and numbers of children placed (Mar 2011)

Mainstream Carers

- 232 approved fostering households offering fulltime placements for Looked After Children.
- 106 Link Carers - providing 158 short-term placements. The scheme aims to provide places for children and young people aged 0 to 18 but there are difficulties in recruiting short-term carers to take new referrals for teenagers.

- 122 Carers provide 161 long term foster placements, largely for children aged 8 and upwards.
- 54 carers are from non white ethnic groups.
- Some carers provide both short and long-term placements.
- 4 Carers offer respite placements to other foster carers.
- There are 10 carers on the specialist schemes, including 2 offering placements to young people on Remand.
- All mainstream stranger carers receive a fee in addition to allowances for the care of the child.
- 151 Family and Friends households with 204 children placed.

Short Break Schemes

Shared Care

- 54 Shared Care link carers including 5 specialist carers plus one vacancy.
- Three adapted houses which offer care to children who use a wheelchair.
- 15 carers from the South Asian community.
- The scheme offers a mixture of overnight and day care to children and young people. It also has a sitting service with paid employees so it can respond flexibly to a child's assessed needs.
- There are currently 115 children receiving a service from the Shared Care scheme.

Support Care

- 23 Support Carers, 4 from South Asian community 80 children / young people are either matched or on introductions.
- 5 Crisis Carers plus two vacancies - 68 young people placed in last 12 months.

2.3 Fee Structure and Progression

All fulltime foster carers receive weekly Fostering Allowances at a level higher than the minimum rate recommended by the Government. The rates were based on the Fostering Network rates of 2006/7 but have been increased in line with the Councils rates of inflation since that time. They cover weekly cost of caring for a child; food, clothing, household expenses. One additional week's payment is made at birthday, and festival and an additional two weeks for holiday. Exceptional payments may be considered.

Table 1: Standard weekly allowances for fulltime carers for 2011/12

Age of child/ young person	Weekly Fostering Allowance	Additional grants to be paid at appropriate times
0 to 4	£122.51	2 weeks for holiday 1 week for religious festival 1 week for birthday
5 to 10	£139.56	
11 to 15	£173.73	
16 to 17	£211.29	

Table 2: Guide on the percentage Breakdown of Fostering Allowances for 2011/12 as suggested by Fostering Network illustrated below using two of the age bands

Age	Weekly Allowance	Food 34%	Clothing 22%	Transport 8%	Personal 6%	Household 30%
0-4 years	£122.51	£41.65	£26.95	£9.80	£7.35	£36.75

Age	Weekly Allowance	Food 30%	Clothing 26%	Transport 9%	Personal 17%	Household 18%
16-17 years	£211.29	£63.39	£54.94	£19.02	£35.92	£38.03

Carers on **short break schemes** and offering respite are paid the above rates of allowance minus the clothing element and calculated on a daily basis.

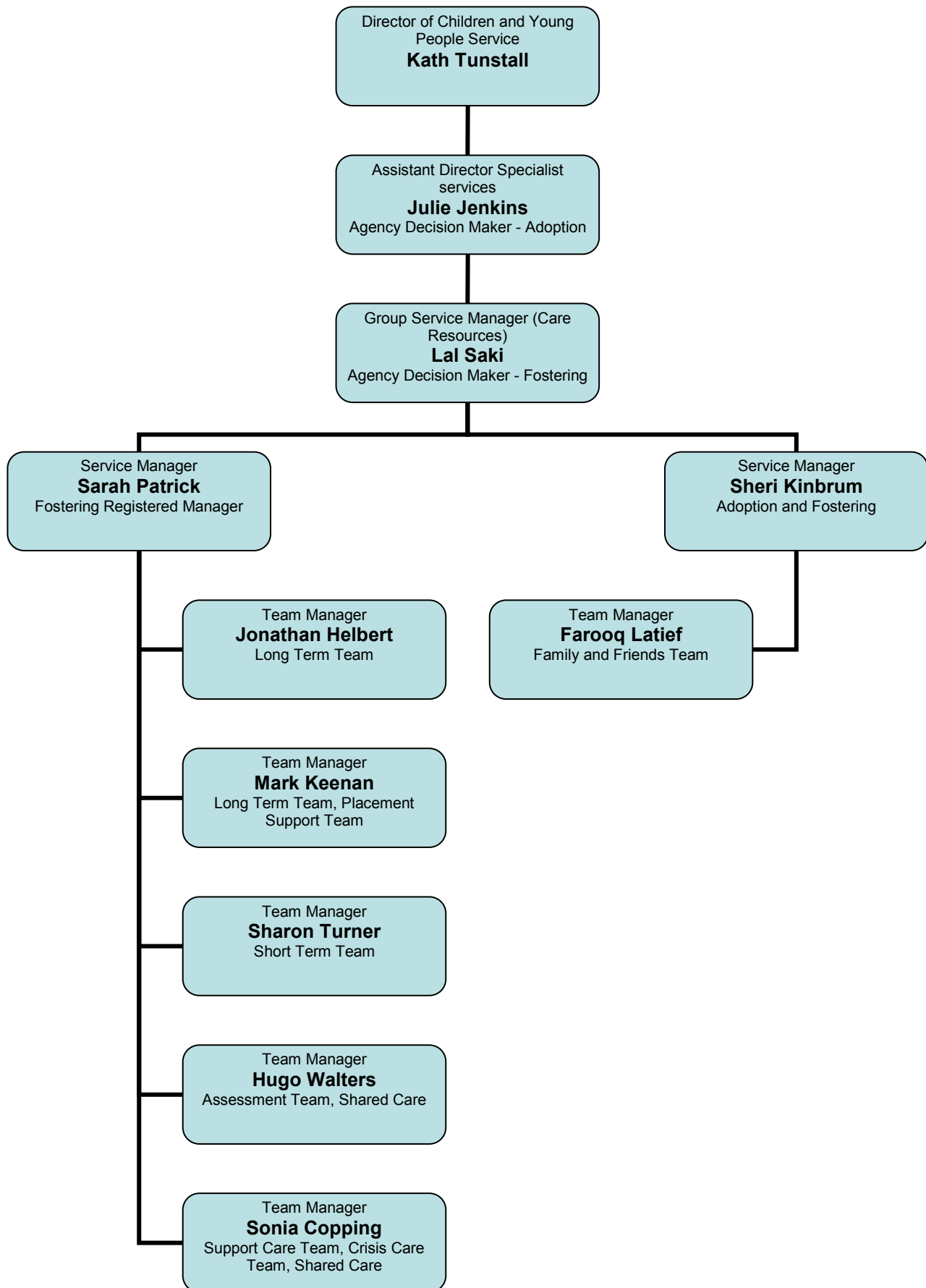
In addition a fee scheme operates to attract carers to take children not known to them, and is outlined below (2011/12 rates):

Level	1 child	2 children	3 children
Level 1	£127.99	£191.99	£255.99
Level 2	£181.32	£271.98	£362.64
Level 3	£255.11	£387.17	£516.23
Specialist	£415.96	(n/a single placements only)	

Respite carers are paid the fee on a pro rata basis and may receive a retainer dependent on hours of work/commitment over 4 week period.

In order to continue to receive a fee or to progress to the next level carers must be able to demonstrate the competencies identified for each level and undertake the required level of training. This is considered at their annual Review.

3. Management Structure of the Service



4. Staff at the Unit

4.1 Staff

- There are six Fostering Team Managers as outlined above.
- The Administrative Services is shared with the Adoption Service and is managed by two Administrative Services Managers. All the managers work as a team to provide strategic management to the whole Unit and to provide management cover, as appropriate, in each other's absence.
- All the Unit social work managers are qualified social workers and have between 10 and 20 years child care social work experience.
- The Service Managers are both experienced managers;
 - Sarah Patrick joined the service in July 2004 holds a CQSW and Diploma in Management Studies and has over thirty years experience in child care, including over 20 years in Adoption and Fostering, 21 of which have been as a manager.
 - Sheri Kinbrum joined the Fostering and Adoption Service in October 2011, and has been with Bradford Council since 1985 when she joined as an experienced social worker. She holds a CQSW and Diploma in Management Studies and has been a manager within the social work service for 20 years.
- Of the six Team Managers for the Fostering Service one has MSC in Management, one holds the Certificate in Management, two are completing the Bradford Management and Leadership Course, and one is currently undertaking the Post Graduate Certificate in Management of Health and Social Care (Level 4),
- Number of Supervising Social workers:
 - Shared Care 7 workers (6.2 fte)
 - Support Care 6 workers (3.5 fte)
 - Crisis Care 2 workers(1.36 fte)
 - Family and Friends Team 9 workers (7 fte)
 - Assessment team 4.5 workers
 - Short term team 9 workers (8.3 fte)
 - Long-term teams 14 workers (10.3 fte)
- Additional support is provided to foster carers by the Units Fostering Support Team which is staffed by four Community Resource workers (3.5 fte) who have a background in residential or community support services. They provide support to placements through direct work with children and their carers and have responsibility for supervising the additional services of the Music group, Fishing Club and Pets Club.
- There is one Training Officer working within the Fostering Unit and Workforce Development

- All social workers are qualified and are registered with the General Social Care Council.
- Vacancies in Social Work Services are currently being recruited to by six monthly contracts due to the current financial situation and constraints on issuing permanent contracts.
- At times of pressure or when an independent view is needed other social workers are paid on a fee basis to undertake assessments that cannot be dealt with by Unit staff. All these workers are also qualified, experienced and registered with the GSCC. The use of this facility will be constrained in the future and may be addressed via additional recruits on a temporary basis to the service to meet this need.

4.2 Additional Services

- There is an experienced Child and Educational Psychologist who is contracted to provide services to the Unit funded from the CAMHS grant. He undertakes initial assessments; provide consultation to staff and carers about matching and placement issues and liaise regularly with the local CAMHS service.
- Education – there is a multi-agency board, chaired by a senior manager from social care, with the focus on promoting the education of looked after children. There is a manager within education whose role is to liaise between the services.
- There is an Independent Chair for the 3 foster panels who has wide experience in social care including a post as a head of service.
- The Health Team for Looked After Children offer services to the Looked After children and foster carers including providing specialist training.
- Support to young people who are looked after. There are several projects run by the Unit – Music Group, Fishing project and the Pet Project. These are facilitated by the workers within the Fostering Support Team and foster carers. Two paid tutors run the Music Group which is held on Saturday. These groups are small and aim to develop young people's interests, self confidence and self esteem. They are open both to foster children, the children of foster carers, adopted children and birth children of adopters.
- Two part time marketing officers are employed on secondment from the central marketing dept. Their main functions are promotion of the service, presentation and analysis from feedback and consultation and organisation of special events.

4.3 Independent Support for Foster Carers

- The Unit has a Service Level Agreement with an agency, Foster Talk, to provide appropriately qualified and experienced social workers to provide independent support and counselling for foster carers during investigation of allegations or complaints where this service cannot be provided by the Bradford Association of Foster Carers and Adopters. All foster carers are also provided with membership of this agency

5. Facilities

5.1 Office Location and Facilities

- The Fostering service is based two sites. The Adoption and Fostering Unit is based at with Aire Building at Shipley. All the fostering teams, apart from Support Care and Crisis Care, are located in no 35.Saltaire Road. Support Care and Crisis Care are located on the Springfield site.
- In addition to the Fostering teams the Adoption and Fostering Unit has three adoption teams; the Service Manager for the Family and Friends Team also manages the adoption service and is the registered manager for the Adoption Service. Aire Building is also the base for the Placement Coordination team, responsible for taking all referrals for placements.
- Aire Building is located on a main road between Saltaire and Shipley. Shipley has easy transport links to Bradford city centre and the district in the Aire Valley both by bus and train. Some visitor and disabled parking is available directly outside the building. Street parking is available directly opposite and nearby, some of which is time limited during the day. There are public car parks within a few minutes walk. Train stations at Shipley and Saltaire are also close by.
- The main building has a range of meeting rooms used for both the general public information meetings, preparation and training, Panel Meetings and an interview room. Refreshments are provided for the training groups for Foster Carers and Panel Meetings.
- There is disabled access to the ground floor meeting rooms with more limited access to the basement meeting rooms. A lift provides access to those but is not able to take some wheelchairs. There is a Minicom link at Reception.
- There is an equipment store including equipment for disabled children.

5.2 Springfield Site

- The Support and Crisis Care Service is located on a complex which also has offices of several children's care management teams, including the team for disabled children.
- The complex is situated opposite the main entrance of Bradford Royal Infirmary. It is accessible by bus and has car parking.
- There are two meeting rooms one of which is used for carers training.

6. Recruitment and approval of Foster Carers

6.1 Enquiries

Enquiries may take several different routes dependent on the type of fostering that interests a potential applicant and the systems are regularly reviewed.

Due to the level of enquiries received for mainstream fostering there are currently some delays in taking applications forward unless for an identified priority area but the current target between applications to approval at Panel of 8 months is currently running at 75 %.

Information about the Fostering Service can be accessed in a variety of ways including the recruitment line and several websites; Bradford website (www.bradford.gov.uk) accessed from the home page by using the A – Z of services menu, the “one stop” shop, B-Direct (www.bdirect.org.uk) and the Units’ own website (www.bradfordadoptionfostering.org.uk) there is an additional website to give further information on short break schemes

Mainstream carers

- Enquiries for general fostering, whether received by the recruitment phone line, email, internet or visit to the office is dealt with by the Fostering Admin Recruitment Officer. Some basic details about eligibility will be discussed that time by this Admin Officer who will follow the potential applicants through the process up to approval.
- An interpreter is available through the three way phone service via the Interpreting and Translation Unit. Help is also offered by social workers in the Unit who speak Asian languages. Currently there are social workers who speak Urdu, Punjabi, and Mirpuri
- The Unit recruits all types of foster carers; those who need to become Looked After and who cannot be placed with family or friends as well as people offering short breaks. Some prospective carers may have no experience of fostering, parenting or professional child care; others will have a background of professional child care and may be particularly interested in joining the specialist scheme.
- There is a high level of enquirers for mainstream fostering. Response rates to these enquiries are monitored. All enquiries for this type of fostering are received by the Admin Officer Recruitment, who sends out an information pack with the dates of Information Meetings which interest parties must attend.
- The bi-monthly Information Meetings held at the Unit (usually on the 3rd Wednesday of the month) between 6:30 and 8:30 pm. The Admin Officer, Recruitment welcomes all enquirers and records their basic details. An interpreter is available for South Asian families. Asian and Black staff are usually present at the Information Meetings Workers from the short break schemes are also present to provide information about those types of fostering.

- Foster carers and adopters are available to talk to people about their experiences prior to fostering social workers holding individual discussions with each potential applicant. During these initial discussions some basic details are taken to ensure that the basic eligibility criteria are met and to identify any issues which may affect an application and which may need early exploration e.g. medical.
- Enquirers are also informed of the priorities for the service in meeting the needs of the children and those people who are expressing an interest those areas will receive priority. Others are informed of the timescales or given information of other agencies.
- .After that meeting and having established that the basic eligibility criteria are met, arrangements are made for the applicant(s) to be seen, usually at home, to discuss their interest in more detail, identify any potential problems and enable both parties to decide on whether an application should be made . At this stage if it is decided to proceed with an application the registration process will be completed and plans made for a full foster carer assessment.
- Where a decision is made it is not felt appropriate to take an application the reasons for this are confirmed in writing with the option of an appeal to the Service Manager Fostering.

Short Break Schemes

Support Care

- The main sources of recruitment for Support Carers are from mainstream foster carers who either want to reduce the hours or change the service they offer. Most have heard about Support care by word of mouth through current carers, some have attended the Information meetings for mainstream fostering but have decided they do not want to provide a full-time placement.
- Crisis Carers have followed similar lines but the team have also approached social work agencies and placed adverts and articles in the press.

Shared Care

- Shared Care carers are generally recruited from people who have some experience of disability.
- Recruitment is through word of mouth, advertising, local events and articles about the scheme in the local press.
- Due to the small number of enquiries about the scheme all enquirers are followed up with a phone call and visit by a scheme worker.
- Shared Care day and overnight carers have a full competency assessment and are approved by the fostering panel. Sitters do not go to panel but are still assessed against relevant fostering standards.
- Social worker's from Shared Care are responsible for the supervision of their carers and are involved in matching and setting up new placements. This includes ensuring carers are trained in specific areas individual to the children to whom they are matched.

- Specialist (contract) carers are recruited from current carers as it is felt they need to demonstrate they can manage the complex issues with which they will be faced.

Family and Friends Carers (Connected People)

- These carers are always known to the child or their family and are only approved for these specific children. Many Family and Friends carers will have children placed with them in an emergency following the decision that the children cannot safely remain at home and will need to become Looked After during an assessment. When this happens Social Workers have a duty to consider whether children can be placed with their relatives or friends of the family. Some children then remain with these carers if they are unable to return home or may move onto other carers/adoption.
- All Family and Friends carers are required to have the same statutory checks and meet the required national basic standards to be approved as foster carers. Currently they do not attend preparation training prior to their approval or having a child placed with them.
- The responsibility for the assessment of these carers in planned and emergency situations is the Family and Friends team in conjunction with the child's social worker.
- Following their approval Family and Friends carers will be allocated a supervising social worker from that team; responsible for the carers' supervision, support and discussion of individual training needs.

6.2 Assessment Preparation and Approval

- Once an application is made statutory checks including enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau, other children's Services, medicals, NCPCC and personal referees are taken up.
- Applicants for all fee paid schemes (not Family and Friends carers) are then invited to attend the next series of preparation and training sessions, all applicants must attend, these are based on the training package produced by the Fostering Network and are held over both weekdays, weekends and evenings. There aims to be a minimum of three groups per year and four dependent on demand for mainstream carers and two for each of the short break schemes.
- Following the completion of the groups, a worker will be allocated to complete an assessment using the Competency Model and carers are asked to complete a Competency Portfolio.
- Once completed, the Assessment Report and Competency Portfolio, with a recommendation, are presented to one of the three Fostering Panels who make a recommendation whether to approve or not to the Agency Decision maker; in Bradford this is the Group Service Manager Resources.
- All carers need a reasonable command of English to complete Induction and NVQ training.
- The Fostering Service informs all foster carers in writing of their approval terms and requires that they sign a Foster Care Agreement before any children or young people

are placed with them. They will be expected to abide by the terms of that agreement and the service specification which relates to their particular scheme.

- Foster carers are required to notify the Fostering Service of any significant changes in their family or household circumstances.

6.3 Termination of Approval

- The Fostering Service has responsibility to recommend to the Fostering Panel the termination of approval of any foster carer if it is no longer satisfied that the foster carers or the household are suitable.

If the Fostering Panel recommends to the Agency Advisor that a foster carer's approval is terminated or that their terms of approval is amended he writes to the foster carers giving notice that he proposes to terminate or review the foster carers' approval this is known as "the qualifying determination " and informs them that they may provide written representations to either the Fostering Service or apply to the Secretary of State for a review by an Independent Review Panel if they do not agree with the Agency Decision Maker's qualifying determination. The carers need to make these submissions within 28 days of the letter.

If they choose to make representation to the Agency the case will be referred back to the fostering panel to consider the written representation.

If they choose to apply to the Secretary of State for review by an independent panel that Panel will consider all the papers presented to the original panel and their written representation.

If the Foster Carer does make representation the agency decision maker awaits the recommendations of either the IRM or the Fostering Panel and considers all the information and recommendations when making the decision whether or not to proceed with the termination.

If the foster carers do not make any representations the agency can make their decision to terminate the approval.

7. Training and Support

7.1 Training

- The service provides relevant training opportunities for the different types of fostering. The training programme is drawn up following the identification of training needs and an evaluation of the outcomes.
- Provision of such training may be undertaken by Fostering Service staff, partners within the Children and Families service, the Workforce Development Training Unit or external providers.
- Specific recommended training must be undertaken by foster carers in their first three years in order to progress within the fee levels and further ongoing training is required to maintain their progression thereafter.
- The foster carer training courses programme includes the following:
 - First Aid
 - Behaviour Management
 - Processes, Procedures and Recording
 - Life story work
 - Basic Child Protection
 - Basic Drug Awareness
 - Moving Children on
 - Children on the Autistic Spectrum
 - Education
 - Health & Safety
 - Attachment issues
 - Loss and Separation
 - Sex and Sexuality
 - Working with Birth Parents
 - Moving and Handling
 - Triple P (parenting skills)
- The Unit will provide training to ensure that foster carers are aware of equal opportunities issues and have the necessary skills and strategies to provide an anti-discriminatory service.
- Any training undertaken will be evaluated by the foster carer and their supervising social worker as part of the annual review.
- Written records are kept of all training undertaken. Each carer is provided with a Personal Development Folder for the purpose of building a portfolio of training and other development.
- Financial assistance will be considered to facilitate training which has been identified as essential for a particular carer if this is not generally available.

7.2 Support for Foster Carers

- Every foster carer should be allocated a supervising social worker to provide support and advice to the carer and family and to act as a link between the carer and the Unit.
- In more specific terms, what each may expect of the other in the supervising social worker and carer relationship will vary according to the carer's family situation and the specific needs of a placement at a given time.

- In the absence of the supervising social worker or in an emergency, the duty worker is available during office hours. They will alert the appropriate manager if this is required.
- Foster carers are advised of the benefits of the membership of their support organisation FosterTalk and their membership fees are paid for by the Fostering Service.
- Foster Carers are provided with the Foster Care Handbook which outlines the relevant policies and procedures.
- Foster Carers are entitled to prompt payment of allowances and fees. Application for help with any exceptional costs, beyond those covered in the weekly allowances, may be made in writing via the Supervising Social Worker.
- All foster carers should have House Buildings and Contents Insurance and inform their insurance company in writing of their involvement in fostering and that for the purposes of the insurance policy the foster children and young people are regarded as members of the Foster Carer(s) family.
- The Council's liability insurance arrangements will indemnify foster carers for sums where they become legally liable to pay compensation arising out of:

(a) Accidental injury or illness to foster children or young people in their care, or

(b) Accidental injury or illness or damage to property belonging to others caused by the foster child or young person in their care.

The council will also provide indemnity insurance against deliberate damage to property by a foster child or theft from the foster home by a foster child subject to Foster Carers own insurance arrangements being inadequate. (Details are contained within the insurance section in the Fostering Agreement provided once a decision has been made that they are suitable to foster).

- Foster carers are provided with guidelines for contacting Bradford's out-of-hours service, the Emergency Duty Team. The team contacts the fostering manager on Duty if they need a placement out-of-hours or if there is a serious situation that requires the advice of a manager from the Service or to support a foster carer.
- Fee paid carers are entitled to up to 28 days paid leave. This may be taken at the end of/in-between placements to provide a break from the challenges and demands of fostering. However, this is not always possible, but arrangements for leave should be made to minimise disruption to the children placed. For those children in long-term placements it would usually be expected that carers take the children with them. Additional payments are made to carers who do not take their leave. The Department also considers and facilitates appropriate arrangements for respite periods if this is assessed as being essential for the support and maintenance of a particular placement.
- Expectations of support, visits and communication are agreed following approval by the Fostering Panel, and reviewed at the foster carer's annual review.

- Careful consideration will be given, within the annual review, to the needs of the foster carers and their family members and the effect that fostering has on them.
- The Departmental policy is that all Looked After children should have an allocated worker and that any changes of worker will be notified.
- The Service will undertake to arrange preparation, advice and guidance for any foster carers who may be required to give evidence in court relating to a placement.
- Foster carers are encouraged to attend fostering support groups.
- There may also be opportunities for the foster carer's own children to attend a group or activities alongside other children who foster.

7.3 Foster Carer Support Groups

- There is currently a support and training group for Specialist Carers that runs throughout the year.
- Foster Carers networks are good and they organise a range of support groups amongst themselves.
- Support Care and Crisis Care both have a support group which meet on a three monthly basis.
- Shared Care has a support group for their contract carers which meet 2/3 times per year.

8. Reviewing Carers

- All foster carers should have an annual review of their approval as foster carers conducted by their supervising worker. These will be chaired by a manager if there have been serious concerns, allegations, or difficulties with the agency.
- A review may also be held at other times according to need, such as at the end of a long placement, proposal to extend the terms of approval or following a serious concern or allegation.
- Prior to the meeting the supervising social worker will send to the carer their consultation form alongside consultation forms for their children. There are plans for the introduction of View Point to obtain the views of the carers children.
- Feedback forms are also requested from the social workers for the children who have been placed and Consultation forms are also sent to the children/ young people (if appropriate to their age and ability) who have been in placement over the previous year. If they are unable or unwilling to complete the form it is expected that their social worker includes any of their comments they may wish to make. Viewpoint is also now available to all Looked After Children to express their views electronically.
- Consideration should also be given to receiving feedback on the placement from the child's parents and other professionals.
- The review meeting considers all the information makes a written summary of the discussion, along with any areas of disagreement, and records the recommendations.
- The Review reports must be presented to the Fostering Panel:
 - on the first annual review
 - following a recommendation for an increase or significant change to the terms of approval, such as increase in number of placements, age range
 - recommendation for deregistration
 - dispute in terms of the carers' terms of approval
 - Panel should also consider all reviews following a child protection investigation or a serious concern about the carer's ability to meet the fostering standards.

9. Complaints Comments and Compliments

9.1 Complaints

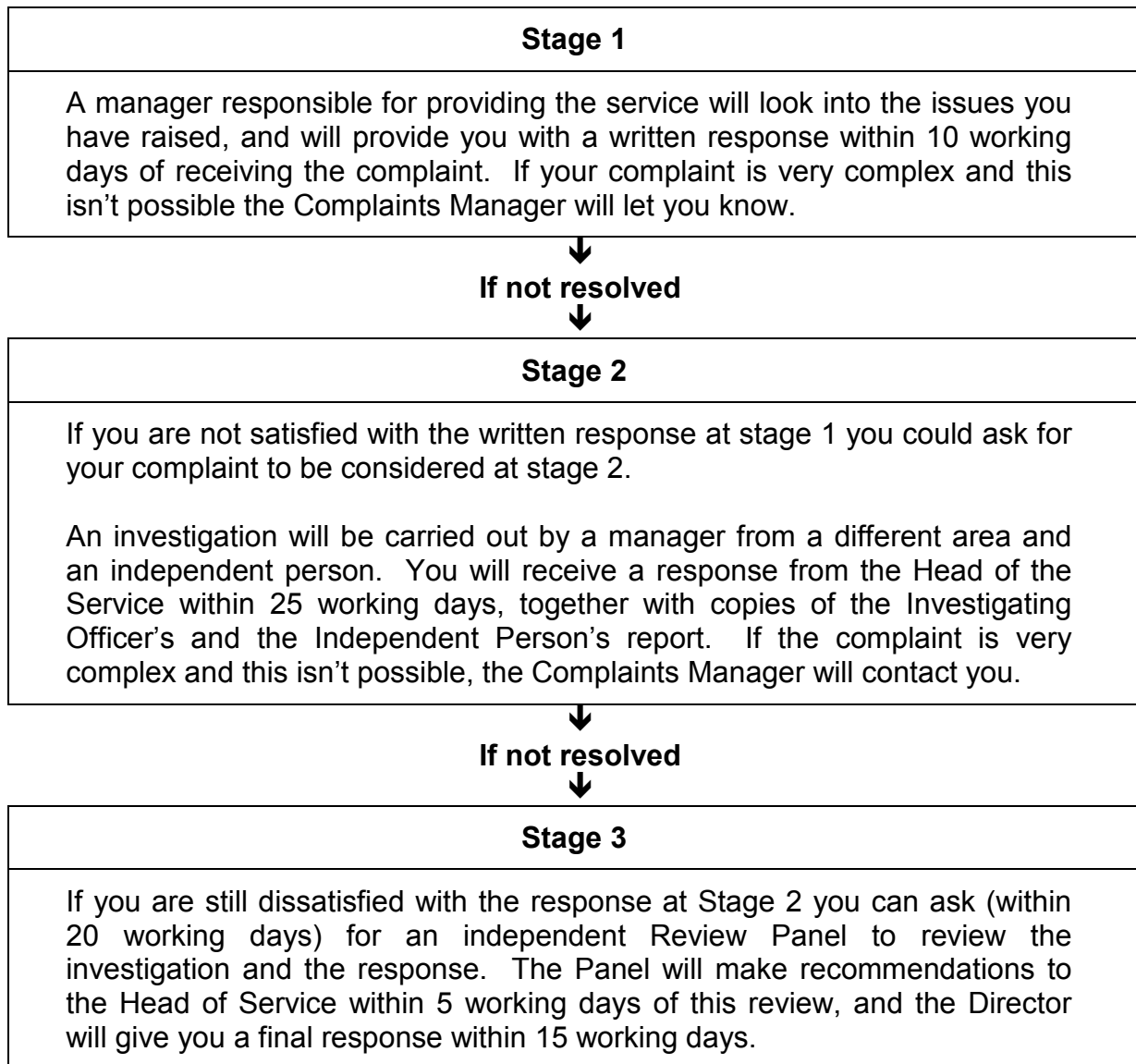
Children and young people should feel able, and know how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of social services including their foster home. Any complaint(s) should be addressed seriously and without delay.

- The Children and Young Peoples Service values and encourages feed back concerning the care of the child or young person.
- The complaints procedure is open to children placed with foster carers. The Unit will ensure that this procedure is available and made known to its foster carers if they wish to make a complaint on behalf of a child or young person

9.2 Complaint by a Child or Young Person

- Children or young people in foster homes wishing to make a complaint about any aspect of the services, including their foster home, should use the Children's Complaint Procedures. The national regulations spell out how these complaints are to be conducted. To help them with this, children can have access to an advocate from Voicability Service (details at end of this document) who will assist with the complaint/ act as advocate.
- Foster carers should ensure that any child or young person placed with them has a copy of the children's leaflet, relevant to their age; those who cannot read, but who are able to understand the process, should have it explained to them.
- If a carer needs help with this, they should contact Voiceability.
- Any allegations of abuse in the foster home will be dealt with under the Departments Safeguarding Procedures.

9.3 Procedure for investigation of complaints from children and other service users

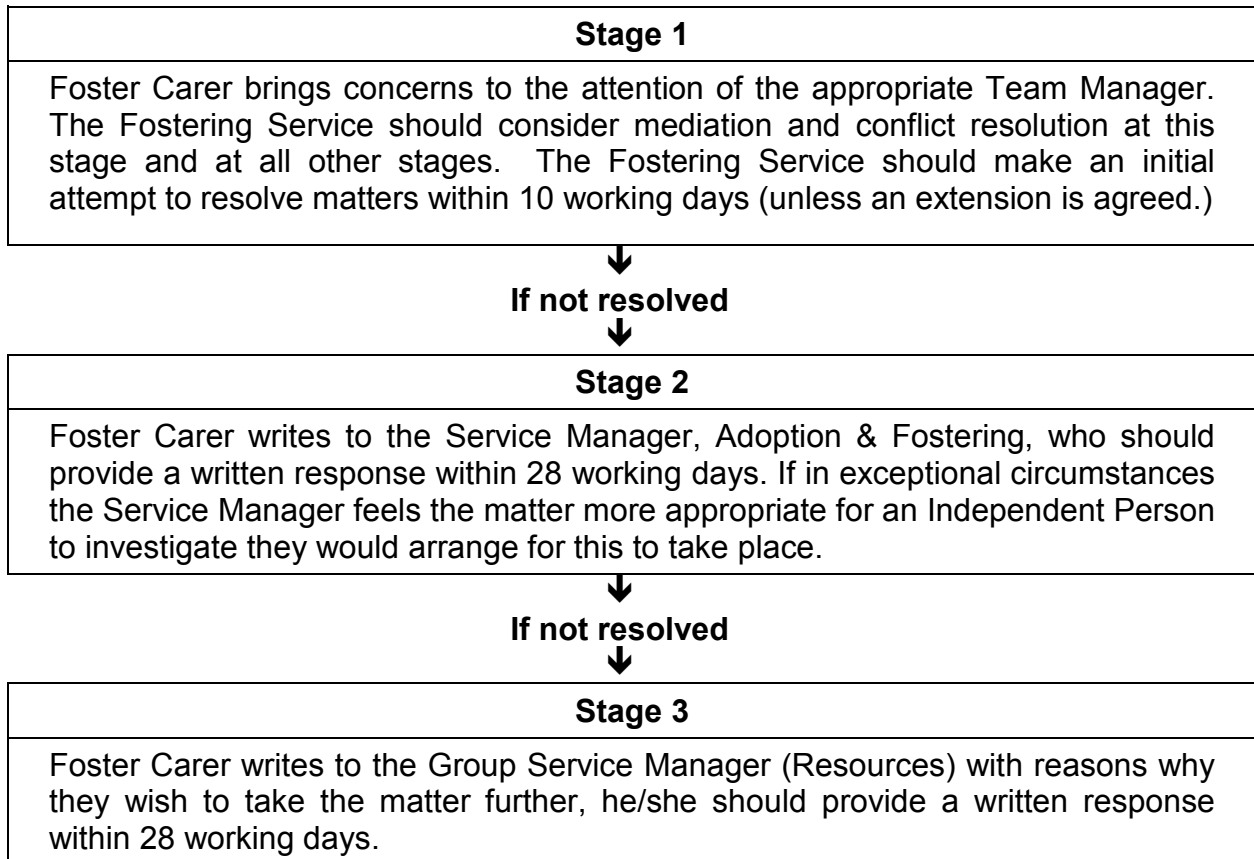


9.4 Complaints by Foster Carers

- Foster carers wishing to complain about the Service in respect of children or young people placed with them should use Children and Families Complaints procedure outlined in section 9.3.
- If the complaint is in relation to the **terms and conditions** of their contract, including payment or **other matters concerning the Units actions**, they should raise the matter initially with their supervising social worker and if dissatisfied with the response follow the procedure in the table below.
- If the complaint relates to disagreement between the Unit and the carers regarding the carers terms of approval this must be considered by the Fostering Panel, in line with national Fostering Standards and Regulations.

- The Fostering Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision maker, the Divisional Service Manager, who must then write to the foster carers informing them of his/her views and giving the carers 28 days to outline their response in writing. This will then be considered and may be then presented back to the original Fostering panel for further consideration. The Panel who may either make a different recommendation or uphold their original recommendation. The Agency Decision maker has to take note of the recommendations of the foster panel before proceeding to make his/her decision.

9.5 Procedure for investigation of complaints in respect of foster carers terms and conditions



9.6 Comments

You may make a comment or suggestion about how to improve the service by adding to the suggestion box located at Aire Building, using the Councils *Complaints, comments, compliments* leaflet or by emailing/writing directly to a manager or worker at the Service.

9.7 Compliments

A compliment received from someone providing their name, whether in the form of card, email or letter, whether an individual staff member, foster carer or the service will be passed onto the Complaints and Compliments Department for the Children and Families Service.

9.8 Number of Compliments and Complaints

- The number and type of compliments and complaints, and the outcome of the complaints are recorded by the Complaints section.
- For the year 2010/11, there were 8 complaints against the mainstream fostering service. Three were upheld or partially upheld. Two were still being investigated.
- No complaints were received against the short break fostering schemes.
- 9 compliments were recorded for this period

Any complaint or compliment is to be addressed to one of the addresses below:

The Complaints Officer

Department of Social Services
FREEPOST BD2400
Olicana House,
Chapel Street
Bradford
BD1 1BR Tel: 01274 432916

Service Manager Fostering

Adoption and Fostering Unit
Aire Building
35 Saltaire Road
Shipley
BD18 3HH Tel: 01274 437343

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231

VoiceAbility

Carlisle Business Centre
60 Carlisle Road
Bradford
BD8 8BD Tel: 0800 012 4314

Revised: September 2011