



# first fostering

1st for children and young people

## Statement of Purpose

"To be the first fostering agency providing a high quality service, meeting the needs of children and young people."

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Principle and Values
4. Status and Constitution
5. Management Structure and Staff
6. Service provision for Children & Young People
7. Background
  - a) Quality Standards
8. Recruitment and Assessment: Foster Carers
  - a) Inclusion
  - b) Recruitment
  - c) Application and Assessment
  - d) Initial Training and Preparation Groups
  - e) Management and Emergency Support
  - f) Supervisory Visits and Unannounced Visits
  - g) Foster Care Review
  - h) Foster Care Handbook
  - i) Record Keeping
  - j) Peer Support
  - k) Investigations into Allegations
  - l) Knowing why carers cease to foster
  - m) Foster Carer Training and NVQ
  - n) Financial Information
  - o) Placements & Matching Information
9. Complaints and Outcomes
10. Contact First Fostering

## 1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.

These regulations require fostering agencies to produce a Statement of Purpose which will be a useful source of information to staff, foster carers, prospective foster carers, children and young people who are placed with First Fostering foster carers, their parents and colleagues from partner Agencies/Local Authorities.

First Fostering aims to meet and exceed the requirements arising from:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2002; Wales 2003)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England & Wales)
- The Children & Young Persons Act 2008

The Statement of Purpose includes:

- The aims and objectives of First Fostering
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by First Fostering

First Fostering will provide a copy of the Statement of Purpose to Ofsted and on request will make a copy of it available to:

- any person working on behalf of First Fostering
- any foster carer or prospective foster carer of First Fostering
- any child (subject to their age and level of understanding) placed with a foster carer by First Fostering
- the parent of any such child

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated at least annually.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

### **Aims:**

The main aim of First Fostering is to provide high quality substitute family care to looked after children and young people. First Fostering is committed to working in genuine partnership with local authorities, agencies, health and social services trusts, parents and carers in order to achieve positive outcomes for looked after children.

At First Fostering we aim to continually develop and improve our services. First Fostering will not compromise on its high standards. First Fostering will actively seek regular external evaluation.

### **Objectives:**

- To identify foster placements across Southern England by recruiting, supporting and training a broad range of foster carers.
- To include people from all backgrounds in order to reflect the demographic make up of all areas.
- To provide foster placements where each child will have stability, security and a warm, safe, caring environment where they can thrive
- To ensure the cultural needs of each child will be met.
- To enable all children to benefit from educational opportunities where they can thrive
- To ensure a child's physical and emotional health care needs are met and a positive healthy lifestyle is encouraged.
- To promote contact with the birth family and significant others during a placement and to encourage and facilitate this as appropriate.
- To ensure a plan for the child's future is acted upon within the timescales set at each review.
- To ensure all foster carers have training, guidance and support of a fully qualified designated Supervising Social Worker.
- To carefully match the needs of looked after children and young people with the particular skills of carers.
- To ensure 24 hour support for children, young people and foster carers.
- To engender a culture of continuous review and improvement.

### **3. Principles and Values**

#### **First Fostering:**

- Is passionate about the rights of Children and Young People.
- Believes all children and young people should be allowed to develop their future potential in a safe, caring environment that offers full protection.
- Is committed to excellence in childcare provision and provides a child centred service.
- Believes that training, supporting and developing foster carers is an essential part of maintaining best practice.
- Will constantly reflect on the development of its services.
- Will demonstrate appropriate attitudes.
- Will remain professionally focused.
- Is committed to listening to its customers and acting on complaints.
- Strives to make a difference.

**"We pledge never to compromise on our own high standards of service and to regularly and actively seek external evaluation."**

## 4. Status and Constitution

First Fostering, an independent fostering agency, is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Registration No: 6857951). In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989 First Fostering has produced a memorandum and articles of association.

The Board of Directors comprises:

Hilary Doherty, Managing Director  
Peter Woodruff, Director of Operations and Training  
Rebecca Boehme, Director of Marketing

The Board meets regularly and is responsible for guiding the organisation in the following areas:

- The culture and values of First Fostering
- The vision and mission of First Fostering
- The strategic direction of the organisation
- The development and review of policies and procedures
- Financial management of the organisation
- The day-to-day operation of the organisation
- The management of the organisation's human resources
- Corporate governance including meeting all legislative Requirements

## 5. Management Structure & Staff

The Senior Management Team will meet each month to:

- Receive reports from the Operational Management of the organisation, Finance, PR & Marketing, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Administration and Human Resources.
- Keep up-to-date with, and disseminate good practice and changing legislative requirements.
- Share information.
- Set priorities and major objectives.
- Review performance and act on any need for change.

First Fostering aims to recruit a broad range of qualified Social Workers with considerable post qualifying experience in local authority, especially child protection work, the health service and private and voluntary sectors. All Social Workers are expected to undergo post-qualifying training in childcare. Social Workers will be encouraged to undertake specialist responsibilities in relation to recruitment of foster carers, foster carer training and panel issues.

All administration staff will be qualified in the use of a range of software. All will be encouraged to complete NVQs in aspects of Business Administration and attend any in-house/external training courses relevant to the needs of the Company.

In addition to permanent staff, First Fostering will have a pool of people who will work for the agency on a self-employed basis across a variety of roles e.g. social workers completing assessments of prospective foster carers, independent investigations of formal complaints or direct work to support a child and other specialist consultants in medicine, law and health and safety.

All casual or self-employed workers have to have the necessary qualifications and experience relevant to the work they are undertaking. First Fostering carries out the same range of checks and enquiries on casual and self-employed workers as those for permanent staff. This ensures that the welfare of children and young people is not compromised. These checks include enhanced Criminal Record Bureau Check, 2 References (one of which must be current or most recent employer) and follow-up telephone calls to referees. Checking of identity is also undertaken i.e. verifying appropriate photographic evidence and documentation i.e. original qualification certificates.

First Fostering will have an ever-increasing and dedicated team of people working with us. Everyone's role within the organisation will be clearly defined and is as important to our success as is the quality of our foster carers.

### **Who's who at First Fostering?**

Hilary Doherty, Managing Director and co-founder of First Fostering, has worked in the childcare field for over 35 years as a social worker and a senior manager. She is a qualified social worker with a degree in Social Policy and a master's degree in Social Services Management. She has over 6 years experience as founder and Managing Director of a leading independent fostering agency.

Peter Woodruff is Director of Operations and Training and a co-founder of First Fostering. Peter has 30 years experience of Human Resource Management, over 20 years of which have been in the care sector, including senior management roles at Director level. Peter has 6 years experience of developing and delivering training to foster care panels and management development programmes to a leading independent fostering agency

Rebecca Boehme is Director of Marketing and a co-founder of First Fostering. She heads up the PR and Marketing department. She has a degree in International Business and French along with a European Masters in Business Science. Rebecca worked in Brussels as a Financial PR consultant managing blue chip companies. She has over 3 years experience working to develop a leading fostering agency.

Christopher Woodruff – Services Manager.

Christopher has a business degree and significant experience working in retailing and in education. Christopher has worked as a teaching assistant, which included 1-1 support of pupils who display challenging behaviours.

John Doherty – Finance Manager.

John has 40 years experience of managing integrated accounts for a world class blue chip company.

## 6. Service Provision for Children and Young People.

First Fostering aims to recruit a diverse range of foster carers approved to take a range of children from aged 0 - 19 years. This includes placements that cater for a range of ethnic backgrounds, children with physical and learning disabilities, children with challenging behaviours and mother and baby placements.

We aim to offer placements that meet the needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds.

## 7. Background

First Fostering will provide a Fostering Service to children, young people and their families, in accordance with the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- National Minimum Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Service Regulations (England 2002; Wales 2003)
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008

First Fostering aims to provide a range of placements for children and young people, who are unable to live at home with their families, for short or longer periods.

Foster care is the preferred choice for most children who cannot live with birth parents or relatives. Contact with the birth family is of fundamental importance, not only to any plans for the child to return home, but also to a young persons' sense of identity (unless there is a no contact order).

First Fostering aims to offer a flexible service able to meet the assessed needs of the child and their family and to help fulfill the aims of the child's care plan.

First Fostering will work with Local Authorities to achieve outcomes in the five areas specified in Every Child Matters:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy & Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being

It is a minimum requirement that all prospective foster carers must have at least one spare bedroom. Children who are placed with First Fostering's carers will not, under any circumstances, be expected to share a room with another child in placement or a child of the family. The only exceptions to this are siblings, or if a child expresses a wish to share a room, once in placement with another child. The situation is evaluated first to ensure it is safe for the children to share.

In the case of siblings sharing a room, at referral an assessment is undertaken to take account of abuse, sexualised behaviour, whether the

siblings get on and age appropriateness for sharing a room.

Foster carers work in partnership with social workers and the child's natural family to promote the best interests of the child.

This document sets out the procedures, principles and purpose of First Fostering.

## a) Quality Standards

- To comply fully with The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2002; Wales 2003), the Children (Protection from Offenders) Regulations 1997 and adhere to the UK National Minimum Care Standards 2000.
- Every effort will be made to match children with families that reflect their religious and cultural needs.
- Issues around child protection will be dealt with immediately, in line with locally agreed procedures.
- School attendance and academic achievement will be promoted for all children and young people, in line with Department of Education and Skills guidance.
- Daily written records on each child or young person will be provided.
- Corporal punishment will NOT be used in any circumstances. Guidance will be provided on the use of sanctions and a written record kept of any implementation.
- First Fostering and its carers will maintain vigilance around confidentiality.
- Assessments will be completed by qualified and experienced staff with active participation by applicants.
- All foster carers will complete 'Skills to Foster training or it's equivalent.
- Foster carers will have continuing training in line with the Children's Workforce Development Standards, including NVQ's, and regular support groups.
- We shall ensure each foster carer and foster home fulfils all health and safety requirements, is risk assessed and has a safe caring plan.
- Foster carers work to an agreed care plan and within the terms of the Placement Agreement.
- Foster carers will promote contact with the children's families unless there is a 'No Contact Order' in place.
- Foster carers will receive regular support visits from supervising social workers and regular telephone contact.
- 24-hour telephone support will be provided to foster carers by an experienced, qualified social worker.
- Foster carers will have an annual review.

## 8. Recruitment and Assessment: Foster Carers

### a) Inclusion

Discrimination of all kinds is an every day reality in many children's lives and foster carers are encouraged to be aware of issues regarding disability, race, culture, religion, sexuality and class, in order to promote the welfare of the children they look after.

Applications for assessment to become a foster carer are welcome from people from all areas of Southern England regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, culture or employment status.

### b) Recruitment

First Fostering will regularly advertise for foster carers in many regions across Southern England. We aim to recruit carers to meet the needs identified in each area.

We also receive applications from people who have heard of our good reputation and by word of mouth. We aim to capitalise on the publicity generated by events such as National Foster Care Fortnight and any relevant media programmes which may have a positive impact on recruitment.

### c) Application and Assessment

Anyone over the age of 21 years may apply to become a foster carer. A welcoming response is given to all enquiries. There is immediate exclusion of any applicant who has been convicted of an offence against a child, or any serious offence against an adult.

There is no upper age limit for foster carers. Applicants must be reasonably healthy and active to enable them to care appropriately for a child. Applications are welcomed from all people, regardless of marital status, employment situation, gender, sexuality, culture, and religion.

#### **Applications are assessed as follows:**

When a person first contacts First Fostering to express an interest in Fostering, he or she will be put through to a communications assistant or a supervising social worker to enable both parties to share information. An Information Pack will then be sent to the interested person. On receipt of a completed application form a home visit by a social worker will then take place in order for the social worker to impart information regarding fostering to all family members, to check that the home conditions are clean and warm, that there is space for a foster child to sleep and to conduct an initial screening interview.

Following this interview, if appropriate, an invitation to training and preparation groups is given. An assessment using The British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F begins by a qualified social worker who will undertake a competency based assessment.

The assessment will cover the topics laid down in the Children Act 1989 and the National Standards in Foster Care as follows: -

- Birth certificates, marriage and divorce certificates, national insurance number, driving licences, passports and any other relevant papers which relate to an applicant's history and identity, such as naturalisation documents, must be seen.
- A medical will be carried out for each applicant. First Fostering's Medical Advisor will interpret and advise on the extent to which the health of the applicant may affect the capacity to act as a foster carer.
- Applicants are required to provide written consent for police records to be consulted to check for previous convictions. A record of convictions will not necessarily preclude approval, but will require careful consideration and consultation with Senior Management. Police checks are carried out on all members of the household age 16 years and over via the Criminal Records Bureau enhanced check.
- Social Services records are checked in all areas where the family have resided, to ascertain whether events have occurred, such as child protection issues, which would affect the suitability of the applicants.
- NSPCC records are checked.
- Department of Health records and List 99 are checked via the CRB enhanced check.
- If there are children of school age in the family, information regarding their educational attainment and personal development will be sought from the head of the school.
- If applicants have previously been foster carers, a reference will be obtained from the organisation for which they fostered.
- Applicants are required to name at least two referees, both of whom must be interviewed.
- A written reference is required from each applicant's present employer, and from all previous employers where the applicant has worked with children.
- Adult children of the applicant who no longer live at home will be interviewed. If the applicant has younger children who live elsewhere, consideration may be given to interviewing them also, if appropriate.
- Where appropriate, we may also interview ex-partners, obviously remaining open and sensitive to circumstances, but by a process of negotiation, establishing the suitability of the applicant to foster.
- The applicant's views on discipline will be explored. Corporal punishment must not be used in any circumstances.
- The Health Visitor of the family will be consulted if there are children under 6 years of age.
- Other areas covered in the assessment, which are set out in the BAAF Form F, include family lifestyle and standard of living, the applicants attitude and expectations, leisure activities and interests of the family, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background, understanding of issues of discrimination. Access to schools, health facilities and leisure centres is also identified.
- Overseas checks will be undertaken where appropriate.
- A health and safety inspection will be undertaken.

Subject to the requirements of legislation and guidance on disclosure records, the content of the assessment report will be shared with the prospective foster carer. Information supplied in confidence by referees/third party will not be disclosed.

### **Timescales for Assessment of Foster Carers:**

- All telephone and email enquiries will be returned the same day, or if out of hours, the next working day.
- Written information about fostering and an application form will be sent on the same day as the initial telephone call, or if at the weekend or out of hours, the next working day.
- Once an applicant has given a clear expression of interest i.e. by returning an application form, a home visit by a supervising social worker will be offered within two weeks. This will be confirmed in writing on receipt of the application.
- At the initial visit, if appropriate, consent and Criminal Records Bureau forms are completed.
- Preparation groups and assessment will be offered if the candidates are thought to be suitable, and they wish to go ahead.
- The timescale between the initial visit and approval will be no more than four months, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Once the Form F is completed the applicants will have the choice to read it and discuss possible amendments.

### **Approval Status**

All completed BAAF Form F Assessments are presented to First Fostering's Independent Fostering Panel for consideration and its recommendations to the Agency as to whether the applicant(s) are considered to have the ability to carry out the tasks of a foster carer. The panel is made up of a variety of professionals and independent members including foster carers, people with experience of the looked after children system, education and health backgrounds.

- Prospective foster carers will attend the Panel to allow panel members to ask questions.
- Recommendations are then sent to an Agency Decision Maker, for the final confirmation of approval status as foster carer for First Fostering. The final decision is made by a Director of First Fostering.
- Carers may be given general approval as a foster carer, stating the number of children they may foster, and the age groups of the children.
- Once everything is agreed and completed, First Fostering will share (in confidence) information provided during the assessment (i.e. the Form F Report) with Local Authorities, so that they can match up potential carers skills with the needs of looked after children.

## d) Initial Training and Preparation Groups

All applicants must attend initial training and preparation groups - both partners are expected to attend. Adult children may also attend. Training and Preparation groups take place on a regular basis throughout the year. Training groups are three full days 10am-4pm. First Fostering uses "Skills to Foster" training.

The basic subjects covered in the initial training and preparation groups are as follows:

- Working in partnership with natural parents and other professionals
- Legislative framework
- Child development
- Safe caring
- Why children come into care
- Awareness of all forms of child abuse and child protection issues

The training is part of the assessment process and the trainers will provide a report which will be considered as part of the overall assessment.

A comprehensive programme of training is offered after approval in line with the Children's Workforce development Standards and it is a condition of continuing approval that foster carers attend.

## e) Management and Emergency Support

### **Management:**

All foster carers will have a named, fully qualified supervising social worker allocated. It is this social worker's responsibility to manage and support the carer in the fostering task. Although First Fostering does encourage the development of student social workers in work placements throughout the organisation, each student social worker is appropriately supervised and line managed by a fully qualified supervising social worker/senior practitioner at all times.

First Fostering supervising social workers understand that they have a responsibility for ensuring that the child in placement needs are paramount, even though they do not have case management responsibility for the child.

The supervising social worker will visit the carer regularly while a child is in placement, and keep in telephone contact when there is no child in placement. Visits will be undertaken at least once a month, or more if needed. There should be telephone contact at least once a week.

### **Emergency Support:**

At weekends, during the evenings and at night, foster carers are offered an on-call service, which is staffed by a supervising social worker, who in turn is supported by an appropriately qualified Social Work Manager.

When a foster carer has a difficult placement, or in the case of a newly approved foster carer(s) with their first placement, a supervising social worker is then on hand to offer advice and support at any time. When a serious emergency arises, and a home visit is required, carers may contact the 'Out of Hours' social worker. The office telephone numbers are diverted 'out of hours' to the on-call social worker. In addition, a Senior Manager is also always available via a mobile phone.

First Fostering also provides a 24-hour family placement support service available to Local Authorities in the emergency placement of children and young people.

## **f) Supervisory Visits & Unannounced Visits**

### **Supervisory Visits:**

Supervising social workers are responsible for ensuring that the standard of care offered to children in foster care is of a good standard, including safe caring practices, and assisting carers to achieve a good standard of care for the children. Supervision meetings should be an opportunity for all parties to raise issues of concern.

The supervising social workers also have a primary responsibility for assisting in the career development of carers, establishing training needs with them and making plans to meet these. The report of each supervision meeting should record any concerns expressed, any support needs expressed by the carer and how these will be met. A pro-forma will be used and all parties will sign the report at the end of the supervision meeting. The foster carer will be given a copy of the report.

The original supervision record will be kept on the carers' file. The supervising social worker should endeavour to see all children in placement regularly or bi-monthly. Supervision and Support meetings will take place at least once a month for full-time carers.

### **Unannounced Visits:**

Part of the monitoring of the work of the foster carer is occasional unannounced visits by the supervising social worker. There should not be a regular programme of unannounced visits unless there is a particular reason for this, for example if a carer is being closely monitored for some reason, which will be made explicit to the carer. There will be at least one unannounced visit each year.

In addition, First Fostering also undertakes planned visits that are generally carried out by someone other than your appointed supervising social worker; these visits are referred to as Annual Inspections. The purpose of the visits are to check the accommodation and care provided to a foster child is in keeping with the high quality expectations of the Agency. The visits are not intended to be intrusive in any way, and you will be advised in advance of these proposed visits.

## **g) Foster Care Review**

As set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 (Reg. 29), all foster carers must undergo an Annual Review.

The main aim of the Annual Review is to determine whether approval should be renewed, and whether there should be any change in the terms of approval.

The Review will include written pro-forma reports from placing social workers, children and young people in placement, children of the household/carers and the foster carers themselves. Once completed, it is signed by the carers and their supervising social worker.

The Annual Review is an opportunity to look at progress in meeting targets set for the improvement of skills to highlight good practice and areas needing improvement, to set new goals and action plan for the next year. Training needs are assessed and commitment to further training agreed.

Most carers enjoy training and attend courses which are offered. If, however, a carer refuses to attend ongoing training, then approval as a foster carer will eventually be withdrawn, as the skills of the carer will not be able to reflect current practice.

The Review Report should be referred for a recommendation to the Fostering Panel and then a final decision made by First Fostering.

## **h) Foster Care Handbook**

First Fostering issue a Foster Care Handbook to each approved foster carer. This contains all relevant policies and procedures to aid them in the fostering task. It is a document that is easy to understand and is comprehensive. The information it contains includes:

- Fostering & the law
- Financial information
- Policies, practices & procedures
- Health & medical issues
- Health and safety
- Managing behaviour
- Education
- Roles, meetings and records

It is kept under review and updated annually.

## **i) Record Keeping**

Foster carers are expected to keep a record of significant events appertaining to the children in placement. Maintaining diaries is considered an important part of the Foster Carers role, and accurate, factual and unbiased recording is therefore paramount. It should also be noted that these diary recordings

could, should the need arise, be used as evidence in the Court system.

This record will be kept in a daily diary, one for each child in placement. Diaries are supplied by First Fostering, and remain the property of First Fostering, so at placement end, the diaries should be returned to the Agency, who will ensure safe keeping and availability for a child to view in the future, should they wish. These confidential diaries MUST be kept locked away. Confidentiality and discretion must be maintained at all times.

### **j) Peer Support**

A "buddying" scheme is in operation, whereby new carers are introduced to an established foster carer who will provide advice and a listening ear.

First Fostering enrolls all foster carers as members of the Fostering Network (financed by First Fostering) as this provides excellent up-to-date information and legal insurance should carers be the subject of a false allegation.

### **k) Investigation into Allegations**

All allegations of abuse made by children against foster carers, or members of the foster carers family, will be thoroughly investigated in an unbiased way. Local Authority procedures for handling child protection procedures will be adhered to.

Support for the carers throughout the process will be offered by their supervising social workers, or an independent social worker, as appropriate, and in addition an independent support person if necessary.

### **l) Knowing Why Carers Cease to Foster**

An exit interview is offered to foster carers who cease to foster, with the Director of Operations. The interview is recorded on a pro-forma.

The following information is collected on a systematic basis:

- Accurate information on the number and characteristics of carers ceasing to foster.
- Detailed information on the reasons for those carers ceasing to foster.
- Evaluate feedback on the content and relevance of the assessment and preparation process.
- Evaluate feedback on the range and relevance of services offered to carers following placement

The above process is used to inform ongoing practice.

## **m) Foster Carer Training & NVQ**

### **Training**

Approved carers at First Fostering are expected to attend a 2-year induction training programme. This will be a needs led programme and will include the following training courses:

Year 1

Children's Workforce Development Programme  
First Fostering programmes

Year 2

After the first year of induction training, carers will be assessed on their learning needs and a specific training programme will be provided.

Carers will then be offered a range of appropriate training opportunities over the years they continue to foster. There is an expectation that carers will attend training and refresher courses offered. If they do not attend, their approval status may be withdrawn.

### **NVQ**

After carers have undertaken the Induction Training, they will have an opportunity to undertake National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level Three.

For further on training courses, please contact Peter Woodruff, Director of Operations and Training on 01189 036043

## **n) Financial information**

Foster Carers will be paid up to £390.25 per week per child. Additional payments are available for specialist placements and mother and baby placements to reflect challenging behaviours where other children cannot be placed. The fee base will be raised each April, in line with inflation.

Carers are self-employed and must ensure they pay their own Tax and National Insurance.

In accordance with economies of scale and the good working relationship we have with Local Authorities, the fee paid shall vary with sibling groups. This will usually mean a reduction per child for sibling groups of 2 and over.

Detailed financial information and guidance is supplied to all foster carers within the Foster Carer Handbook.

## **o) Placements and Matching information**

### **A Range of Placements**

All placements are 'matched' to ensure that the needs of the child and young people are met by the skills and experience of foster carers. Many of our foster carers have a wealth of experience or specialise in areas to meet the needs of children who have been abused, have challenging behaviours or for

children who have specific medical requirements etc. First Fostering will appoint Placement Managers who are the first point of contact for enquiries about placement choices.

Some children require short placements in foster care due to illness of parents; others need to live in their foster placement until they are able to move into their own accommodation. Sometimes a parent and child placement is needed. Some children and young people have extreme behaviour problems. All children and young people are different and all placements are unique.

We therefore need to recruit a range of foster carers and amongst them will be specialist foster carers who are able to care for the children whose behaviour makes them difficult to place. Some of these young people will have been living in a residential environment, and as such a specialist foster placement is an alternative to residential care.

### **Disabled children**

Some foster carers are able to care for disabled children on a permanent or respite basis. Carers for disabled children will receive appropriate necessary equipment, and will be assessed for adaptations to their home, as will carers of non-disabled children as appropriate.

### **Matching for long-term placements**

When the child's care plan identifies that the child needs a long-term foster placement, a BAAF Form E should be completed by the child's social worker, For an older child (over 11 years or so), or young person, a detailed 'pen picture' may be sufficient information for matching. A matching meeting should then be set up by the social worker, comprising the social worker, supervising social worker(s) of the families interested in offering a long-term foster placement for the child, and residential social worker as appropriate.

### **Foster Placement Agreements**

A foster placement agreement will be completed for each child or young person that is placed with a First Fostering Foster Carer. This will ensure there is written background information for each child and will detail arrangements for contact with families, education and healthcare provision. This enables foster carers to provide the best possible care. Care Plans will be obtained so foster carers can work to agreed priorities.

## **9. Complaints and Outcomes**

First Fostering Complaints Procedure places emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level and an early stage. Complaints that move to stage 2, (a more formal level) are dealt with by an Independent Complaints Person who will conduct a full investigation and take to Panel for consideration. Complainants still not satisfied are referred to the local Ofsted office.

First Fostering views complaints received as serious matters, but also as a way to hopefully learn from and improve the level of service provided. In relation to complaints received First Fostering aim to reflect and take appropriate action in order to change Policies, Practices and Procedures, in order to address the complaints and resolve matters identified.

First Fostering is fully aware of the need not to become complacent, and with this in mind, will constantly review policies, practices and procedures in order to offer a supportive and competitive all round package to Foster Carers so that they remain happy and know they play an important part to the contribution of offering positive outcomes to children and young people.

## **10. Contact First Fostering**

### **Address:**

First Fostering  
Atlantic House  
Imperial Way  
Reading  
RG2 0TD

Tel: 01189 036043

Fax: 01189 036100

Email: [info@firstfostering.com](mailto:info@firstfostering.com)

[www.firstfostering.com](http://www.firstfostering.com)