



LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Department of Children and Young People's Social Care

Fostering Service

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

MARCH 2005

REVISED JANUARY 2008

ACCEPTED BY THE CORPORATE CARERS' BOARD JANUARY 2008

REVISED NOVEMBER 2008

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION

The fostering service of Leeds City Council is provided by Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care. The Service is operated and governed in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and other relevant statutory provision and instruments including the Fostering Services Regulation 2002 ("the Regulations"), the Care Standards act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

This Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with regulation 3 of the Regulations.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- 1 The City council appoints elected members to oversee the work of Children and Young People's Social Care and delegates certain responsibilities to the Chief Officer of Children and Young People's Social Care. The post of Chief Officer is currently filled on an interim basis by Jayne Jack.
- 2 The Department has appointed a registered manager for the fostering service (and for the adoption service), Rodger Walker, who is responsible to the Head of Operations Elizabeth Shingler who is, in turn, responsible to the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer is responsible to the Director of Children's Services, Rosemary Archer.
- 3 There are two fostering teams structured on a geographical basis managed by two team managers, Anne-Marie Stokes and Deborah Schofield (temporary). A third team, managed by Charlotte Thomas (temporary), works in both fostering and adoption and special guardianship and is called the permanency team. The team managers are responsible to the registered manager, Rodger Walker. All the managers named in points 1 to 5 are qualified social workers.
- 4 There is a Family Placement team run for disabled children and their families city wide. A separate statement of purpose for this service has been produced and is available from Kay Beach, the acting manager of that service. However, this Fostering statement of purpose covers that team as well for regulatory purposes.
- 5 Kay Beach is responsible to Rodger Walker.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The fostering service of Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care Department has been set up to provide safe and appropriate placements for children whose needs for accommodation arise in the Leeds area.

It does this by assessing, registering, supervising, supporting and training a wide range of carers.

Leeds operates a fostering scheme called Payment for Skills (PFS) which most of its foster carers are part of. PFS placements are financed by making maintenance payments to Carers and by paying a fee. Payment for Skills has four levels linked to a Task, Skills and Competency (TSC) Framework, and fees are paid to carers on levels 2, 3 and 4. The TSC framework sets out a list of competencies that foster carers must be able to demonstrate at each PFS level. It also sets out training and support group attendance requirements at each level. Each level adds more to the previous level, so that Level 4 Carers develop higher level skills and competencies, and have a more demanding range of tasks that they must undertake. In return they are paid the highest level of fee.

The following types of placements are currently offered by Leeds PFS foster carers:-

1 Temporary

Duration: Up to 2 years pending a permanent placement with birth family, permanent foster carers or residential placement.

2 Permanent

Duration: Until adulthood

3 Fee paid schemes

There are 6 fee paid schemes where the carers are paid level 4 fees allowing them to devote themselves full time to the care of children with complex needs:

a. Remand scheme

Provides placements and support services for young people on court bail and remand, or who have recently been released from a custodial sentence or who have drug dependency issues.

Duration: Until court matters are resolved and the child or young person's case has been heard and disposed of.

Alternatively, if drug dependent, until a suitable placement has been found, but this is intended to be short term.

b. Task centred scheme

Provides permanent placement for children of 10 and above who have complex needs which can only be met by a fee paid carer.

Duration: Until adulthood.

c. Fee paid permanency

Provides the same service as the task centred scheme for children under 10.

d. Assessment scheme

Provides short term placements while an assessment is carried out by the carers in order to enable an accurate picture to be formed of the child's needs in future placements or on return home.

It also provides an outreach service through the Family Resource Centres (see below) so that parents in the community can be worked with on appropriate parenting in order to enable children to remain with their families.

Duration: Until assessment is completed usually between 6 and 12 months.

e. Family Resource Centre Carers

Provides placements through the Family Resource Centre to relieve stress in families and therefore remove the need to accommodate children. Also provides the same service as the Assessment carers in working with parents to improve their parenting skills.

The following types of placements are also available but are not currently part of the Leeds Payment for Skills scheme:-

4 Planned short breaks

a) This scheme is intended to provide respite care to families over a long period as part of a package of support to maintain children with their families.

Duration: As agreed between family, child, social worker and scheme co-ordinator.

5 Private Foster Care and Family and Friends Carers

Provides publicity on services available to private foster carers and children cared for by them, advises on procedures, services support groups and training. Undertakes assessments and gives support to private foster carers and family and friends carers in conjunction with area social workers and fostering officers.

6 Family Network Carers.

The Department supports the placement of children with extended family members and the fostering section contributes to an assessment of the parenting capacity of such carers to the approvals process. The same payments for the maintenance of children are paid to Family Network carers as are paid to mainstream carers and they are able to attend training if they wish.

7 Family Placement Service

This service provides short breaks and a sitting service to disabled children and their families city wide.

As above, this service also complies with Fostering National Standards for its child placements.

Health and education

By arrangement with the PCT in Leeds 2 nurses are part of the Looked After Children Health Team and provide advice and training to foster carers on health issues, attend the foster carer liaison group and look at immunisation, dental and healthy eating for looked after children. 2.5 further additional posts will be allocated to this work in 2009.

Dedicated paediatricians advise the fostering panels on medical issues for applicants for registration.

A team of therapeutic social workers, jointly funded by CAMHS, provides a service to children placed with carers and also provides a 'clinic' which gives advice to carers on managing children's behaviours.

A Connexions Personal Advisor has been appointed with a brief to work with Year 9 looked after children.

A looked after children head teacher, Alun Rees, has been seconded to the C&YPC service to address attendance and exclusion issues.

A qualified teacher, Julie Pocklington works in the fostering section and provides training, support and personal advice to carers.

A celebration event is held each year to celebrate the educational achievements of looked after children.

As a result of these services the number of children achieving GCSEs has increased as has the number of children going to University.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The shared purpose of Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care, which includes the fostering service, is:

To safeguard and promote the rights, responsibilities and wellbeing of the children and young people of Leeds

To offer appropriate and relevant access to all our services

To consider and respond to individual needs

The Fostering Service's primary aims to achieve this purpose are:

- To adhere to the National Standards for fostering services.
- To work within the Fostering Services regulations.
- To offer a high quality service to children, their families and foster carers within the Leeds City council's equality policy and procedures.
- To work in partnership with the Education service and Health trusts to promote the education and wellbeing of all children in public care.
- To work within the principles of Best Value
- To consult and respond to the views of service users
- To finance and appropriately monitor a comprehensive fostering service

The Fostering Service's objectives to achieve these aims are:

- Train fostering section social workers, foster carers and fieldworkers in the National Standards
- Monitor to ensure standards are being met
- Include in the Fostering and adoption equality strategy measures to ensure that the needs of ethnic minority children and those with physical and other disabilities are met.
- Provide training for carers and promote the attainment of NVQ awards
- Provide training for fostering workers to update practice
- Work in partnership with Voluntary Agencies and other statutory agencies to ensure an effective range of services for children and their families when substitute care is needed.
- Provide foster carers with supervision and support through teams of appropriately trained and qualified staff.
- Provide reports to demonstrate Best Value and other nationally determined targets
- Offer exit interviews to carers to monitor reasons for leaving
- Provide a comprehensive range of information about our services in English, ethnic minority languages and when necessary in Braille.
- Provide, and assist carers to provide support groups and out of hours support services for carers
- Senior managers and elected member regularly meet with representatives of foster carers and members of the Leeds Foster Care Association

STAFFING

There are 16 (full and part-time) Fostering officers, who cover mainstream fostering activities, four Principal Caseworkers, who manage the fee paid foster carer schemes described above, a co-ordinator for the Planned Short Breaks Scheme at Principal caseworker level, two team managers who manage the teams of Fostering Officers and principal caseworkers, and one Resource Team Manager, who manages the team managers. The Family Placement service has a team manager, 3 posts for fostering and permanency, 4 workers (3 WTE) for Short Breaks and 1.25 posts for the Sitting Service.

All hold a social work qualification. There is a range of experience among the staff and all fostering officers must have had at least one year's experience in fieldwork, before joining the section.

No member of staff of Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care is able to become a foster carer registered with this service.

NUMBERS OF CARERS

The mainstream fostering service (the Family Placement service has produced its own Statement of Purpose) currently has 450 Foster Carer households registered. Their names and addresses are immediately available to any authorised person via a computer report.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

There are currently 299 children placed in Short Stay / Temporary foster placements (including Respite, Short Breaks and Emergency), 288 children placed with Long Stay Carers, In addition there are currently 210 children placed with Family and Friends Carers (Family Network Carers). 26 children and young people are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS
WITH RELATED TIMESCALES**

1	Enquiry to section and sending of information pack	*within 3 working days (1)
2	Receipt of registration of interest form, ESCR computer record check and distribution to relevant Team Manager	*within 1 week of receipt (2)
3	Allocation to Fostering and Adoption Officers for initial joint visit	*within 1 week of receipt (3)
4	Initial visit (joint) and write up and return to Team Manager. Complete C to F referral form.	*within 1 month of allocation (7)
5	Decision re proceeding. N.B.: at this stage if it is regarded as appropriate to undertake a 'traditional' assessment Recording Sheet to be completed by Team Manager.	*within 1 week of receipt (8)
6	On receipt of application form CC40A, admin to make up file, commence statutory checks, copy visit and attach to Training Referral sheet for C to F invitation. Distribute to Team Manager for allocation, standard letter prepared and sent to applicants.	*within 1 week of receipt of CC40A (9)
7	Allocation to Fostering Officer. If not allocated within 1 month, Team Manager to write to applicants advising of timescale for allocation.	*within 1 month of receipt of file (13)
8	Allocated Fostering Officer. If not allocated within 1 month, Team Manager to write to applicants advising of timescale for allocation	*contact within 1 week visit within 1 month of allocation (17)
9	Introductory visit, confirm C to F dates outline C to F and assessment process give leaflet and information on competencies either summary A or detailed B. Complete A10 1a to 1g.	
10	Applicants attend C to F; their children of suitable age (approximately 8 years) attend session.	*applicants should be offered a C to F course within 6 weeks of introductory visit. (23)
11	On receipt of confirmation of attendance Fostering Officer commences competency based assessment. It is expected this will entail six home visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - initial (1) - one per competency (4) - summary (1) <p><u>During this process</u> – personal reference forms (C) should be sent to referees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (any relevant employment reference should be sought; - all statutory checks will be received; - applicants will have medical Adult 1 and Medical Advisor comments received. 	*It is anticipated these visits should be undertaken within a 12-16 week period. (39)

12	Other visits i.e. to personal referees and applicants own children should be completed.	*No more than 2 weeks (41)
13	A10 completed and forwarded to applicants for agreement and signature. A11 completed.	*1 month (45)
14	Presentation to Fostering Panel and recommendation sent to Decision Maker	*3 weeks (48)
15	Decision on recommendation at Panel verbally communicated on the day, Decision Maker's letter within one week.	*1 week (49)

It is calculated therefore that:

- from the enquiry to approval should be no more than 12 months.
- from allocation to approval, no more than 9 months.

These are maximum timescales

The ideal should be:

- 6 months from allocation to approval.

Monitoring / tracking systems will be undertaken by admin staff with quarterly reports to Team Managers.

Following registration as foster carers training is delivered as appropriate for the Payment for Skills scheme level to help carers achieve the full list of training, skills and competencies for their level.

Carers have a formal supervision once a quarter and this is recorded in writing. There is also an annual review recorded on the appropriate pro forma and agreed by the carer. Decisions are made at the review on whether the current registration level is appropriate.

Support visits are made at a level appropriate to the situation and in agreement with the team manager.

FOSTERING PANEL COMPOSITION

MEMBERSHIP

1 Chair	Children's Service Manager
1 Vice Chair	Team Manager (Children)
2 Social Work Representatives	1 x Fostering and Adoption 1 x Social Worker
1 Elected Member	
4 Independents	1 Education 1 Nurse for looked after children 1 Other person who has personal experience of being fostered. 1 Foster Carer (Other Local Authority)
1 Residential services person	

Total Membership = 10
Quorum = 5 to include Chair or Vice Chair
One of the Social Workers
Two independent members

Professional adviser to the panel

The three fostering panels cover areas of the city in the: East; south and west; north East and North West, respectively. While each panel takes items from its own area they can also deal with items from other areas if the need arises.

Decision maker: Head of Operations, Elizabeth Shingler.

Complaints about the fostering service.

Complaints made about the fostering service:

Total made to the Complaints Officer March 2007 to March 2008:	23
Upheld	3
Not upheld	10
Partially upheld	1
Ongoing	9

One Appendix is attached - a copy of the booklet supplied to children in foster care with the graphics removed.

APPENDIX 1

Child's guide to fostering without graphics. Copy given to child is with pictures and good quality paper.

My Guide to Fostering

This book belongs to

This book is yours to keep.

It is to help you understand what happens and what it will be like when you are staying with a foster family.

Foster families are usually called foster carers.

A foster carer is a family who will look after you while you cannot be at home with your own family.

My foster carer is called

They will welcome you into their family home and keep you safe.

A social worker is a person who will arrange for you to stay with a foster carer. They will visit you while you are there and they will want to make sure that you are happy and well looked after.

My social worker is
and their address and telephone number is
.....
.....

You may or may not meet your foster carer before you go to stay with them. It will be nice for you and your foster carer to get to know each other.

Things you will like to know about your foster carer:

Who is in my foster family?

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.....
.....

What do I call them?

Where do they live?

How many rooms are there?

Can I go anywhere in the house?

Will I be sharing a bedroom with anyone else?

Can I play with my toys in the bedroom on a morning?

What time do I have to go to bed?

What time do I have to get up?

Where is the bathroom and toilet?

Will I be having a bath or a shower?

Who do I ask for food and drink if I am hungry?

Where will I eat?

What other things would you like to know?

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Things your foster carer will like to know about you so that they can get to know you and to help them look after you.

What do you like to eat and drink?

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What don't you like to eat and drink?

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What are your favourite toys and games?

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Do you like television?

If so, what are your favourite television programmes?

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What do you like to wear?

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How do you like your hair doing?

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Is there anything you are frightened of?

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What else would you like them to know?

My Family

Draw a picture of your family and say their names:

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.....
.....
.....

Thank you. This will help your foster carer to know about your own family.

Your family will be important to you. You can talk to your foster carer and social worker about your family whenever you like.

You will need to tell your foster carer and social worker who you want to see or talk to your family.

Your social worker will see your family and help you to keep in touch.

Is there anyone else you want to see or keep in touch with?

What my foster carer will do:

- ◆ They will be in charge of me
- ◆ They will help me to settle in their family home and talk to me about what I can and can't do
- ◆ They will make sure that I have food, clothes and pocket money from a fixed sum of money that they get from Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care to pay for what I need
- ◆ They will make sure that I go to school and they will talk to my teachers to support me in school
- ◆ They will talk with my social worker about how I am doing
- ◆ They will listen to me and help me to talk about anything that is important to me
- ◆ They will look after me and support me

What my social worker will do :

- ◆ They will try to help me and my family
- ◆ They will see my family and tell me about them
- ◆ They will arrange for me to keep in touch with people
From my own family and my friends
- ◆ They will come to see me and my foster carer
- ◆ They will talk to me about why I am staying with my foster carer
- ◆ They will help me to get things off my mind and clear my thoughts

- ◆ They will talk to me about how long I will be staying with my foster carer
- ◆ They will talk with my foster carer and together they will make plans for my care
- ◆ They will talk to other important people about what is best for me
- ◆ They will discuss my care plan with me
- ◆ They will arrange a meeting called a review

What is a care plan?

A care plan sets down on paper what you need and how you are going to be cared for.

Your social worker will draw up the plan after talking about it with you and also other people who are important to you and want the best for you.

Every child who is looked after has a care plan.

The plan will say:

What it is hoped will happen to you in the future

If you are going to keep in touch with your family and how often

Where you are going to school and what help you need in class: you will have a Personal Education Plan

What you need to keep you healthy and well: you will have an Individual Health Plan

The care plan is discussed at your review and changes can be made as they are needed.

What is a review?

Picture of people sitting on chairs and a sofa

A review is a meeting of people who know you or know something about you. It is to discuss and think about your Care plan.

Your review meeting will be held every so often to talk about how things are going for you. Everyone at the meeting will want to find out how you are doing. They will also look at ways to make sure that everything goes well for you in the future.

Before your review your social worker will ask you and everybody invited to the review meeting to write down what they would like the meeting to know. Your foster carer and social worker will help you to decide what you want to say.

Your review meeting is a time for everyone to listen to how people think you are doing and to discuss what is the best thing for you.

The reviewing officer will write down what everybody thinks is best for you.

If you are not at your review meeting your social worker or foster carer will discuss what was said with you.

The people taking part in your review meeting will be:

You --- if you want to be there.

You're Mum or Dad --- or another member of your family.

Your Foster Carer

You're Social Worker

A Reviewing Officer: someone who is in charge of the meeting.

Sometimes a teacher or a school nurse may come to your meeting.

You can have an interpreter or translator at the meeting if you need one.

Things you need to know:

What Leeds Fostering Service does

We look after children who cannot be with their families and do the best we can to keep them safe and healthy and doing well at school.

We do this for all the children we look after, and it does not matter what their religion is, where they or their parents come from or if they have disabilities or if they are boys or girls.

You could be looked after for a short or long time and we have Carers who do both sorts of caring. We have special Carers who look after children on remand, or who need time to be consulted on the best sort of care for them or who are finding life especially difficult and need especially understanding Carers and who can look after them probably till they grow up.

Sometimes children are looked after for short time so that work can be done by a Family Resource Centre to help children to go back to their families. There are also Carers who can look after you for one or two days a week for a while to help families get over any problems they are having.

Children go to the right kind of foster carer to suit their needs.

If you can live with a friend or member of your family we help them to look after you.

There are written down rules that we have to follow to make sure you are looked after properly and we are inspected to make sure we are doing this properly.

If you have any worries about your Carers you can discuss them with your social worker or to our complaints section on 0113 2478627. If this does not work you can speak to these people who do not work for Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care:

Leeds Children's Rights 0113 244 4544

Childline 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Ofsted 08456404040

Each foster carer has a Fostering Officer who will visit the home to make sure you are well cared for.

Once a year a fostering officer has to review your foster carer and will ask your social worker to give details of the care you have been given.

It is important that you tell your social worker how you feel.

Your foster carer receives a fixed sum of money from Children and Young People's Social Care to pay for things you need like food, clothes and pocket money.

Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care think that it is important that children can talk about what they think and feel about what is happening to them.

We hope that you can talk to your foster carers about anything that may be worrying you.

You can talk to your social worker, your parents or family, or your teacher.