



NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction to the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

Newport City Council Fostering Service has produced their “Statement of Purpose” in accordance with The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018. PART 2 (5) of the regulations details the requirements for the review of the Statement of Purpose and the provision of the document to relevant stakeholders. The National Assembly for Wales has issued the Code of Practice for Local Authority Fostering Services, which elaborates further requirements as to the contents and arrangements for reviewing the Statement of Purpose.

In line with the requirements of The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018, the Statement of Purpose provides information about Newport’s Fostering Service. The Statement of Purpose includes details of the management and staffing structure, the range of needs of the children for whom the service is provided and how the service is delivered to meet the needs of children and support them to achieve their personal outcomes. The Statement of Purpose will be available to Welsh ministers, approved and prospective foster carers, any child placed by the fostering service, the parents of any such child, persons working for the purpose of the local authority fostering service and any person on request.

In addition to the Statement of Purpose, there is a range of specific and procedural documents that support the aims, objectives, service principles and standards set out for the fostering service.

Consultation with parents, children and young people, social workers, foster carers, staff in the fostering service and other relevant stakeholders informs service improvement proposals. We will update our Statement of Purpose on at least an annual basis or earlier in the event of any changes made to the services provided.

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Section 1

Management and staff structure of the fostering service

The Newport City Council fostering team is part of Children and Young People Services and based in the Civic Centre, Godfrey Road, Newport, NP20 4UR.

Management of the service consists of:

- The Strategic Director (People) is **James Harris**
- The Head of Children and Young People Services is **Sally Jenkins**
- The service manager for the fostering service is **Joanne Llewellyn**
- The team manager for the fostering team is **Catherine Hywood**
- The team managers for the Family & Friends Care Team are **Laura Pritchard and Laurie Ryall**

Currently the structure of the fostering service is subject to review with proposals to create a Family and Friends Care Team, which will have responsibility for the assessment and support of both Kinship Foster Carers and Special Guardianship arrangements. Recruitment to the post of team manager for the Family and Friends Care Team has been successful and the duties of the post are covered on a job-share basis. Consultation about changes to the fostering service are ongoing with staff and foster carers.

Staffing structure of the service

All staff in the fostering service are employees of Newport City Council and as such have the same rights, responsibilities and benefits of any employee within the council. Newport City Council promotes the well-being of their employees through a number of schemes, which are available to staff, such as:

- Agile working policy
- Family Friendly policy
- Employee Assistance Program, initiatives such as 'Zest' and 'Lifestyle' promotes mental and physical well-being and provides advice, information and access to a counselling service.

Currently the staffing structure of the fostering service consists of qualified social worker posts and unqualified posts, with both part time and full time positions:

Team Manager x 1 full time
Team Manager x 1 job share
Senior Practitioner x 2 full time
Consultant Social worker x 1 full time
Social Worker x 6 full time
Social Worker x 9 part time
Placement Officer x 1 full time
Social Work Assistant x 1 full time
Social Work Assistant x 1 job share
Placement Support Workers x 2 full time

All qualified social workers register with Social Care Wales and training opportunities are provided to maintain their registration, meet regulatory requirements and to promote continuous professional development.

Staff in other roles have learning and development opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in their current roles and promote continuous professional development to move onto other roles, such as the social work traineeship scheme.

Section 2

Who do we provide the fostering service for?

The Newport fostering service aims to provide quality care for children and young people who are looked after by Newport City Council. We recruit and approve foster carers who we support to provide a stable and caring home for any child who cannot be cared for by their family, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Our foster carers are approved to care for children, age 0 – 18 years of age, on a temporary basis until they can return home to family members, or on a permanent basis until children reach adulthood. Family and friends who are approved as foster carers care for specific children.

The proposals to create a Family and Friends Care Team would include supporting children being cared for by family and friends through special guardianship arrangements and children who are living with parents while remaining on a care order.

In addition, the fostering service supports young people to remain with their foster family post 18 years old through 'When I am Ready' or supported lodgings arrangements.

Every child has their own individual needs and the overall aim of the fostering service is to ensure that children and young people live in an environment that keeps them safe from abuse and neglect, and promotes their emotional and physical well-being and educational development.

Section 3

How we recruit our foster carers

In order to provide a service, which meets the needs of children and supports them to achieve their personal outcomes we aim to recruit a range of carers and support them to develop the knowledge and skills to understand the needs of the children and how to care for them.

Newport fostering service has a recruitment strategy to promote fostering and attract enquiries from prospective foster carers for Newport City Council. The fostering service values the opportunity to work with the local community and businesses to engage local people in the recruitment process.

We have developed a streamline process for responding to fostering enquiries, which are received through both our fostering website and direct telephone contact with the team. We provide further information about fostering for Newport to all initial enquiries within 24 hours, followed with an offer of an initial home visit. If applicants wish to proceed further and it is suitable to proceed, we invite prospective carers to attend our pre-approval skills to foster training, facilitated by the fostering team and our foster carers. We understand that making the decision to apply to become a foster carer requires information, advice and support and we aim to provide this every step of the way.

Newport fostering service has experienced assessing social workers to undertake our fostering assessments and each prospective foster carer(s) is allocated an assessing social worker. All fostering assessments are undertaken in accordance with The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018 and include statutory checks, medical assessments, employment and personal references, which will be undertaken for all applicants. DBS checks will also be required for any other adult living in the household. We share the completed assessment report with the prospective foster carer(s) who have the opportunity to make written comment on the process and final report.

If during the assessment any information comes to light, which would mean applicants are not deemed suitable to become foster carers they are notified in writing in line with the requirement of The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018.

Applicants are invited to attend fostering panel with their assessor when their assessment report is being presented by their assessing social worker. We aim to make the experience of attending foster panel as comfortable as possible and give applicants the opportunity to contribute to the discussion as well as ask questions of their own. Foster panel will make a recommendation, which will be considered by the Fostering Agency Decision Maker. Applicants will receive confirmation of the outcome of their application to become an approved foster carer for Newport fostering service by letter.

Becoming an approved foster carer is the beginning of a journey. As a fostering service we aim to recruit enough fostering families that will enable us to match children with the right foster family, and also to support our foster carers to develop the skills and confidence to recognise that each child has their own individual needs and how best to care for them.

The fostering service undertakes assessments required under regulation 26 of the Social Service and Well-being Act (2014), for the immediate placement of children with family or friends known to them. This role will be transferring to the Family and Friends Team when the team is established.

Currently the fostering service also undertakes viability and connected person assessments on persons identified as potential carers for children prior to or during legal proceedings being instigated should alternative arrangements be required. This role will transfer to the Family and Friends Team when established.

Newport fostering service has a dedicated social work role as Private Fostering Officer, which has responsibility for children and young people placed in private foster care, this part of the service is inspected under Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) (Wales) Regulations 2006. The Private Fostering regulations specifies the duties of the local authority in regard to Private Fostering, including the assessment and review of reported arrangements, the duty of other parties to report private fostering arrangements and the duty of the local authority to raise awareness of private fostering with other agencies.

Section 4

What we do to support our children and foster carers.

Newport fostering service provides a range of support initiatives for both new and experienced foster carers to assist them to meet the needs of our children.

Supervision and Support

Each fostering household is allocated a supervising social worker who will provide home visits, and supervise and support for the foster family. Foster carers can contact their supervising social

worker between visits if needed, when in need of additional support the frequency of contact and visits can increase.

Formal supervision will take place every three months between the foster carer(s) and supervising social worker. Supervision will help to consolidate any learning from training, provide an opportunity to reflect on the fostering role and to identify any additional support needed for the child and foster family.

The supervising social worker will complete a Foster Carer Review on an annual basis as a minimum. Annual reviews provide an opportunity for the foster carers, their family, the children they care for and social workers to reflect on the previous 12 months as foster carers. Newport foster panel will consider the annual review reports where it is:

- First annual review
- Change of approval status is being requested
- In the event of a significant change in the fostering household
- Every third year in the event of no change as a quality assurance function
- After completion of a section 47 investigation where an allegation has been made against a member(s) of the fostering household

Foster panel will make a recommendation of the continued registration of the foster carer(s), including any change to their approval status. Foster carers are welcome to attend foster panel with their supervising social worker to contribute to the discussion and ask any questions. Foster panel are keen that foster carers receive the positive comments made by panel members when considering their foster carer review.

Learning and Development and Support Groups

Learning and development opportunities are provided through a variety of methods, such as formal training, 1:1 sessions with our consultant social worker, access to online resources for information and learning and support groups.

Newport foster carers have the opportunity to attend the Under 5s support group and the Men Who Care Group. The Under 5s support group is for foster carers caring for pre-school children and held on a monthly basis in a local venue. Speakers attend the group to provide age related information and advice. The Men Who Care Group is for male foster carers, held on a monthly basis at a local venue, the meeting is an opportunity for male foster carers to network, and have guest speakers attend for part of the evening.

Currently we are looking to develop foster carer support groups on a geographical basis to support foster carers in establishing a local support network with other Newport foster carers. We are also looking to develop support for sons and daughters of foster carers.

Newport fostering service facilitates a PACE Parenting Programme, foster carers completing the initial six-week training have the opportunity to attend the PACE Parenting Group, which is held on a monthly basis by a social worker and our consultant social worker. Foster carers have the opportunity to network but also to have 1:1 discussions with the consultant social worker and social worker on how to use the PACE parenting model for a child they care for.

Financial support

Foster carers are provided with financial support to care for a child in the form of a weekly fostering allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child and a weekly placement fee for the foster carer. The fostering allowance and the placement fee is provided for each child placed with the foster carer(s) and vary according to the age of the child. Fostering allowances are set using Welsh Government recommendations of a National Minimum Fostering Allowance. Information about

fees and allowances and other financial support is updated at the beginning of the new financial year and distributed to all foster carers.

Foster carers are paid travel expenses for transporting children to school, health appointments, contact etc. Newport fostering service has clear written guidelines for making claims.

Newport fostering service provide foster carers with equipment such as bedroom furniture, pushchairs, cots and travel seats in order to care for a child. We will work with our colleagues in Health to ensure children with a disability have the equipment needed in their foster home. Newport fostering service has clear written guidance on what equipment is provided for foster carers.

Additional support

Home contents insurance – Newport fostering service has a home contents insurance policy, which will consider claims that could not be processed through the home contents insurance of the foster carer(s).

Respite care – Newport fostering service recruits respite foster carers to provide support for the foster carer and child if appropriate for the child.

Out of hours telephone support - provided each evening 8.30pm – 10.30pm by staff from the fostering service. In the event of an emergency, out of hours support is also available from the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team.

Care First – Foster carers have been given access to telephone and Face to Face counselling services through Care First, which is also available to Newport City Council employees. The service is confidential, can be accessed directly and used to give advice and support on a wide range of issues.

Newport fostering service pays for membership of The Fostering Network for each fostering household, which allows access to free learning and development opportunities, a fostering advice line and any other initiatives developed by the organisation.

Foster carers can access education advice and information from the Looked After Children Education Co-ordinators and advice and information regarding health from the Clinical Nurse Specialist (LAC).

When searching for foster carers to care for our children Newport fostering service use all the information provided to assess the foster carers skills and ability to meet the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children. Newport fostering service has several fostering families who have cared for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. Foster carers are supported in their role by accessing services from The Sanctuary, a local community project providing a welcome and support for refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

Newport fostering service support our foster carers' learning and development to care for our children and be able to support them in relation to their sexual orientation and gender identity. We have offered foster carers new training opportunities from The Fostering Network such as the Fostering LGBTQ Children and Young People Masterclass and signpost our foster carers to relevant services such as Umbrella Cymru and Mermaid UK. Umbrella Cymru is a gender and sexual diversity specialist support organisation that offers a range of services to people across Wales, including advice and guidance, information and signposting, counselling, advocacy and emotional and practical support.

Newport fostering service supports our foster carers in meeting all children's language and communication needs. Each child who is looked after has a health assessment completed by the clinical nurse specialist, which will identify any speech and language problems and advise on the process for making a referral to the speech and language team. Foster carers who care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children have access to Language Line and interpreters are provided where appropriate for the young person's wishes and feelings to be clearly established. Newport children have access to a range of schools. Which deliver education in the Welsh medium and the local authority has a translation service to ensure information is provided in the Welsh language for children and adults in line with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations.

Section 5

How we consult with our children and foster carers

Newport fostering service has a variety of methods used to consult with our foster carers and children both on an individual basis and as a collective.

Foster Carer Annual Reviews – provide the opportunity for children in the foster family to give feedback about what they do and do not like about living with their foster family. We also ask the foster carers' own children for their views about being an approved foster family and for the foster carers to express their views. We encourage comments on the wider fostering service as well as their personal views. Currently information is collated using a feedback form, but we will be looking at how we use developments in technology to improve the experience for children and foster carers.

Foster Carer Forum – Newport foster carers are invited to attend the Foster Carer Forum, which is an opportunity for foster carers to meet senior management and the elected member responsible for fostering in Newport City Council. We use the forum to provide foster carers with updates on national and regional fostering service developments as well as consult on proposals for local service developments. Foster carer forums have been established over the past five years and are now held as a regular event twice a year.

National and regional consultation – we use email to distribute requests for consultation from a variety of external partners as well as in-house practitioners e.g. National Fostering Framework and The Fostering Network. Foster carers contribute directly to these consultations, usually through a link.

Consultation with children - Newport Youth Council (NYC) is a youth-led forum to give a voice and influence in decision-making on issues that matter to young people in Newport and meets on a monthly basis at the Civic Centre in Newport.

Newport City Council employs a participation officer to advise on effective consultation with children and young people using the seven Children and Young People's National Participation Standards to make sure, the process, quality and experience of all work involving the participation of children and young people.

Section 6

Useful contact details

Care Inspectorate Wales

South East Wales Regional Office
Government Buildings, Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ
Tel: 0300 7900 126

Social Care Council

South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW
Tel: 0300 3033 444

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Oystermouth House, Charter Court, Phoenix Way
Llansamlet, Swansea, SA7 9FS
Tel: 01792 765600

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend. CF35 5LJ
Tel: 0300 7900 203