

# NEXUS FOSTERING

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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### 1. MISSION, STATUS AND CONSTITUTION

#### 1.1 MISSION

The mission of Nexus Fostering is to provide high-quality fostering placements to enable children and young people to enjoy a positive experience of family life. Nexus Fostering recruits, assesses, supports and supervises foster carers to care for children and young people of all ages.

Nexus Fostering's Foster Carers' Charter states that *"Services for our foster carers remain central to all those who work for Nexus Fostering and are developed in accordance with our vision - that the full potential of children and young people can be met within high quality foster placements."* Grace Wyatt, Director.

*"Nexus Fostering are the fostering company who help our mums and dads have children put in our homes. They help children who don't have safe homes and put them with people like our parents."* Birth Child.

Everyone is welcome at Nexus Fostering and has a key role to play in service delivery

Diversity and inclusion are the principles for how we build our teams and develop our practice. Nexus Fostering strives to create an inclusive culture where all forms of diversity are valued and celebrated. We want to represent the communities we serve and work to ensure no child or young person, applicant, carer or employee is treated unfairly on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, religion or identity. We recognise and value individual differences and contributions and believe in aiming to achieve equality for all. (Equality Statement)

This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all carers, staff and those from whom it commissions a service, to share this commitment. (Nexus Fostering Safer Recruitment statement).

#### 1.2 STATUS AND CONSTITUTION

Nexus Fostering is an independent fostering provider, established in March 2002.

The company's registered office is:

4, Jardine House  
Harrobian Business Village  
Bessborough Road  
Harrow HA1 3EX

Registration number 5577806

The company is registered and inspected by Ofsted, and complies with the standards and expectations identified in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Amendments 2013, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and Fostering Services and Care Standards Act 2000.

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In 2011, 2015, 2018 and 2022 Ofsted inspection resulted in a judgement of Outstanding in all areas.

The Head office is located in Harrow, Middlesex. Local offices support 9 area teams:

- Framingham Earl, Norfolk (Anglia team)
- Edgbaston, Birmingham (South Midlands team)
- Chilwell, Nottingham (East Midlands team)
- Telford (North Midlands team)
- Lolworth, Cambridgeshire (Central team)
- Harrow (London team)
- Ampthill, Bedfordshire (3 Counties team)
- Gloucester, Gloucestershire (South West team)
- Hornchurch, Essex (South East team).

Area offices provide local, comprehensive, meaningful and relevant support to foster carers and children and young people, and support the development of co-operative, professional and responsive relationships with placing Local Authorities.

The Agency is a preferred fostering provider to both individual authorities and Consortiums across all its regions.

## **2. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1 AIMS**

Nexus Fostering aims to:

- Provide fostering placements for 'looked after' children and young people, that offer a stable and consistent experience of family life, to enhance and maximise their life opportunities
- Uphold the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people as being of prime importance
- Deliver services that impact upon the lives of children and young people and result in positive outcomes
- Recruit and retain foster carers in response to the needs of local authorities from a range of backgrounds and experience, with a broad spectrum of identity with the potential to offer a high standard of foster care to children and young people
- Prepare, support and develop foster carers to enable them to provide high quality foster care that supports children and young people in stable placements and optimises their potential in all areas of their lives
- Recruit appropriately qualified and experienced staff who will maintain the standards of high care offered by the carers
- Retain and develop staff and provide opportunities for training and development
- Provide a comprehensive package of supervision and support to foster carers, children and young people and the placement as a whole, to enable and assist in the provision of high quality of care and meet identified needs
- Provide inclusive services and opportunity of experiences to children and young people.
- Encourage and develop the participation of children and young people in planning for their own lives and in service development and review of the agency's systems
- Work in a professional manner with foster carers and ensure a high ratio of staff to carers
- Include a broad spectrum of individuals throughout its service provision
- Engage and communicate with its children and young people, its carers and the Local Authorities it serves, and to provide, review and develop services, skills and resources that are responsive to their requirements

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- Work in close partnership with Local Authorities to identify and promote the best interests of children and young people and ensure their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.
- Assist Local Authorities with planning and service provision
- Respond to all complaints and allegations make full investigation and take appropriate action
- Deliver services compliant with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and meet, or exceed, the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services
- Review and maintain policies and procedures that comply with legislative and statutory requirements and expectations
- Create an environment where all individuals feel safe, respected and listened to regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes and where individual differences are recognised and celebrated
- Manage the fostering agency on a sound financial basis and maintain continuity for children and young people and their carers.

### 2.2 OBJECTIVES

- To provide care that impacts positively upon children's and young people's lives
- To deliver positive outcomes for children and young people so that:
  - Their wishes, feelings and views are heard, respected and acted upon
  - They are kept safe and receive guidance in keeping safe
  - They experience a sense of family membership and enjoy family life
  - Their need for development in all aspects (social, emotional, psychological and physical) is met and their identity (age, ability, ethnicity, faith, gender and sexuality, culture) is recognised and its expression supported
  - They enjoy stability of placement
  - They are helped to be healthy and guided in healthy lifestyles
  - They are supported to progress in their learning
  - They are helped to benefit from contact with family and friends
  - They receive preparation for independence.

### 2.3 PRINCIPLES

- The needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount
- The agency is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all carers, staff and those from whom it commissions a service to share this commitment
- Provision of safe and responsive care entails a commitment to training and development by all individuals involved
- All individuals working for Nexus Fostering, its carers, children and young people, and those individuals in contact with the agency as customer and enquirer, deserve respectful and considerate service and for their views to be heard and managed appropriately
- Foster carers and staff have a right to regular supervision, training, professional development and support
- Carers and individuals who work for the agency adhere to policies and procedures
- The agency is managed in a child-focussed, ethical and efficient manner, utilising business systems, financial support and external support services as needed
- The agency will provide a 'value for money' service for Local Authorities.

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### **3. STANDARDS OF CARE AND SERVICE QUALITY**

#### **3.1 INDEPENDENT INSPECTION**

Ofsted found Nexus Fostering to be 'Outstanding' under their inspections of 2011, 2015, 2018 and 2022. Their judgement considered the experiences and progress of children and young people under the agency's care, their welfare and protection, and the leadership of the agency. Nexus Fostering were found 'Outstanding' in all areas.

#### **3.2 THE FOSTER CARERS' CHARTER AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARTER**

The agency endorsed the expectations and spirit of the Foster Carers' Charter, initiated by Government in 2011. Nexus Fostering set out its own Charter, lodged with the Department for Education, in which the agency and its carers make specific commitments to work together as a team to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The agency and its carers can expect of each other:

- Practice that centres upon the children and young people
- Appreciation of the importance of relationships with the child or young person
- Working in partnership, with information sharing, communication and clear decision-making
- Supervision that offers support, training, advice and development
- Fair and respectful treatment
- Exchange of ideas to develop agency practice.

In partnership with our children and young people, a Children's and Young People's Charter sets out a series of undertakings and expectations in respect of the service offered to children and young people by the agency and its relationship to individuals placed with its fostering families. The Charter recognises their right to be listened to and respected in relation to the decision-making that affects their lives.

#### **3.3 PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- Children and young people are placed with foster carers that match their racial, cultural, religious and linguistic background wherever possible
- The views of the child or young person will be sought and considered wherever possible in respect of their placement and in decisions about their lives
- Their psychological, emotional, identity, educational and health care needs are considered, met, monitored and promoted
- The safeguarding and protection of children and young people are of primary concern.

#### **3.4 ASSESSMENT, APPROVAL AND PANEL**

A robust, analytical assessment is managed in a timely way.

Recommendations to approve and advisory terms reflect the suitability of the household to foster (approval) and the best match for the household (specific matching recommendation.)

The approval Panel, drawn from a Central List of members, provides a quality assurance function independent of the agency in respect of the assessment and review of carers, and may comment upon policy and development issues.

Panel and Central list membership includes a balance of gender, age, ethnicity and experience, and meets the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

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### 3.5 FOSTER CARE AGREEMENTS AND UNDERTAKING

Foster Care Agreements set out the expectations and understanding of the agency and its carers and are signed following approval, in compliance with Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Regulation 27(5)(b).

Foster carers undertake to:

- Care appropriately for children and young people and work to Placement Plans.
- Inform Nexus Fostering of relevant significant changes in their household or details.
- Follow procedures set out within the Foster Carers' Handbook.
- Take part in regular, formal supervision.

### 3.6 MONITORING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Registered Manager oversees a comprehensive monitoring system in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 6 and the notification stipulations of Schedule 7. Safeguarding matters are a key priority, and the Registered Manager has lead responsibility.

An Assistant Director has overall responsibility, alongside the Registered Manager, for monitoring the quality of service delivered and adherence to policy and best practice in all domains across the agency.

The Senior Leadership Team considers regular reports under Regulation 35 of the FSR. They are aware of business, recruitment and service delivery activity and factual data is further informed by personal knowledge of the agency's staff, carers and children and young people.

The outcomes and progress for children and young people are monitored and understood by narrative and qualitative measures, and the means of doing so are regularly under review.

Annual audits of practice identify opportunities for learning and development across the agency.

Service leaders and practice leads in each area promote excellence in key areas. Practice changes and develops as a result of:

- Research
- Legislation
- Customer, carer or child and young person feedback
- Experience through practice

### 3.7 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The agency has a clearly defined 'Complaints and Representation' and 'Whistleblowing' process that is accessible to children and young people and their families, foster carers, staff, Central List members, independent assessors, local authorities and other independent persons commissioned to contribute to our service. Complaints are treated respectfully, efficiently and promptly and resolution is sought as early in the process as possible, without un-necessary escalation. The agency facilitates the intercession of independent persons where necessary. The agency monitors complaints and aims to learn from all situations.

### 3.8 SAFEGUARDING

The agency sets the safeguarding of all children and young people placed in its care, and that of the children of its foster carers, at the heart of its practice. All members of the agency and everyone commissioned by it to deliver a service, is expected to adhere to the highest safeguarding practice. The agency incorporates good practice and research evidence into its service delivery. Awareness of up-dated safeguarding knowledge is expected of all staff and carers.

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An agency Safeguarding Statement sets out our undertakings and commitment in detail.

#### 3.9 PARTICIPATION

A Head of Participation and local area Participation Groups support and promote the participation of children and young people in the development of the agency and serve as an additional 'quality assurance' measure for our practice.

We make a commitment to children and young people:

*"We want to:*

- *get you more involved in how Nexus Fostering is run*
- *give you a voice in what goes on*
- *listen and learn".*

#### **4. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Services available for children and young people include:

- Supervised contact with families
- Access to national organisations for 'looked after' children and young people
- Support to access full health and education services
- Bespoke written materials
- Life story and permanency preparation
- Individual and group work
- Holiday activities and outings
- Leaving care advice information and support
- Access to therapeutic assessment and therapeutic guidance for the conduct of placements
- Education support and assistance, preparing staff and carers to engage with schools in planning to meet the needs of children and young people in their care.

The agency:

- Sets aspirations and aims high for children and young people, and celebrate every step towards them
- Maximises opportunities for children and young people to meet their potential to achieve
- Shares understanding of the impact of past experience, learnt behaviour, coping strategies and the mental health of children and young people, with the team around the child or young person
- Advocates for children's and young people's rights and access to appropriate support and intervention.

Foster carer supervision addresses the dimensions of care provided to children and young people, ensures the best interests of children and young people are safeguarded and promoted, that their views and wishes are understood and represented, and identifies further appropriate services to promote their physical, mental and emotional welfare. Delegated authority is actively promoted.

#### **Looked after children and young people say:**

*"I feel safe at Nexus"*

*"You can talk to ANYONE"*

*"Thank you so much for having amazing foster carers"*

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### **5. SERVICES FOR OUR FOSTER CARERS**

#### **5.1 TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Training for prospective and approved foster carers takes place throughout the year and is delivered locally, on-line and virtually across the agency in mixed-area groups.

Preparation and initial post-approval training provides the basis for carers to achieve and to evidence the Training, Support and Development Standards.

A range of additional post-approval training courses support carers to make a commitment to their personal professional development within active, monitored development plans. Foster carers are supported to complete further vocational training appropriate to their role. Their development is addressed in annual reviews.

Supervising social workers develop carer skills, interests and approaches to individual children and young people through knowledgeable advice and guidance.

#### **5.2 SUPPORT**

Nexus Fostering offers a comprehensive package of support for carers, which has a proven positive impact on placement stability and improves the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

The support provided includes:

- A designated supervising social worker, in regular contact
- Access to 24-hour duty support, every day of the year
- Accessible advice and information to support positive outcomes
- Therapeutic advice and support for carers
- Annual reviews that highlight strengths and achievements and identify routes to development
- Support meetings and newsletters
- Activities for children and young people, including carers' own children
- A fee structure that recognises the value of the fostering task, festival and birthday allowances and a fortnight's paid respite allowance per year
- Outreach workers to support children and young people in placement
- Financial advice
- Paid membership of FosterTalk, including access to a legal advice line

### **6. SERVICES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

A range of placement opportunities includes:

- Short-term, task-focussed and Long-term foster placements
- Sibling placements for those who need to stay together
- Emergency placements – specific in time definition
- Responsive, flexible placements, where the objective changes over time.
- Parent and Child arrangements: parenting support or parenting assessment
- Children & young people with disabilities
- 'Supported' Placements: Specialist multi-disciplinary placements for children and young people with complex attachment problems and challenging behaviours; a therapeutic fostering approach shared by the network of staff and foster carers around the child or young person wherein each placement receives direct input from a consultant psychotherapist and inclusion of support services tailored to the individual
- Staying-Put and post-18
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC)
- Special Guardianship and/or Adoption support packages

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Nexus Fostering manages a responsive recruitment strategy to meet the developing needs of Local Authorities.

The agency maintains a positive commitment to working to the care plan and supporting the corporate parenting of the Local Authority set out within a *'Working in Partnership and Supporting the Care Plan'* policy

## **7. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND STAFFING**

### **7.1 STRUCTURE**

#### **The Founding Director and Responsible Individual**

is reported to by:

#### **A Director, Registered Manager and Assistant Director**

reported to by:

#### **Regional Operations Managers**

reported to by:

#### **Area Managers and Area Staff**

### **7.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

**The Senior Leadership Team** has oversight and line responsibility for staff and their practice, founded upon their individual significant experience in Children and Family work and Family Placement. They have ultimate responsibility for the practice and business functions of the agency, strategic planning and business continuity, development of services to children and young people and information management systems.

#### **Each member has designated and joint responsibility for:**

- Safeguarding compliance and the Registered Manager's Monitoring duties
- Oversight of social work practice, carer supervision and management and child care practice
- Management of Regional and Area team staff
- Quality Assurance of practice and policy
- Regulatory compliance
- Training of staff and carers
- Recruitment and Assessment of carers
- Review of carers
- Placement arrangements and matching

**All** contribute to the overall safeguarding, development of policy and practice, and monitoring of the agency's systems.

Together, they address matters of policy, processes and practice; monitor and review business practice and the business plan; maintain and promote corporate identity; establish and maintain relationships with individual local authorities and consortiums; link with and contribute to national fostering organisations and policy developers. They liaise with partner services, including Human Resources, Financial Services, Marketing, Business Development Managers I.T. and communications providers.

**Regional Operations Managers** share regional oversight with the Registered Manager of the 9 local areas served by Area Managers and their teams. They are responsible to the Registered Manager and may deputise for them in the RM's absence.

Managers are responsible for identifying and developing business opportunities with new and existing Local Authority customers.



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**Area Managers and Deputy Area Managers** lead teams of supervising Social Workers and administrators. They assign specific areas of responsibility to local senior staff e.g. recruitment.

**Social Workers** supervise approved foster carers, supporting carer households and the children and young people in placement. Many have defined specialisms within their teams.

**Children and Young People's Support Workers** deliver direct services to children and young people who need one-to-one work in their individual personal development.

**Recruitment, Assessment, and Panel Managers** are experienced in their respective fields-applying their knowledge to identify and progress potential carers for assessment, expressing interest in the agency through the activity of **Story-Tellers** initiating marketing activity.

**Training and Review Managers** ensure development of carers and staff meets their professional development needs and impacts upon the well-being and safety of our children and young people. **Practice Development** for staff is addressed by an appointed Lead.

**Service Leads** provide oversight of specific practice areas within the agency. Our **Supported Placements** (therapeutic) service, **Participation** initiatives and **Education** liaison, advocacy and support are managed by designated managers who have considerable knowledge and understanding of their respective areas of leadership. A **Carer Engagement** Lead and officers ensures our carers' needs are known and understood and applicants become engaged by contact with our **Carer Mentor** scheme Lead.

**Clinicians** provide oversight of the therapeutic parenting model and interventions with fostering families and the children and young people in their care. They work in partnership with the **Therapeutic Leads** of the Supported Placements service.

**Placement Managers and Officers** oversee the referrals, matching processes and placement endings within the agency, in liaison with area teams. They liaise with local authorities in finding potential matches for referred children and young people. They are guided by social work practice principles, exercised in the child's best interests.

**Administrators, Administration Officers and Office managers** develop, manage and maintain administrative systems and build professional, personable, working relationships with individuals working for Nexus Fostering, the foster carers and the children and young people. Identified individuals have responsibility for local facilities and office Health & Safety.

The agency utilises an additional pool of **Independent Reviewing officers, Assessors and Outreach staff**.

Nexus Fostering commissions **external trainers, therapists, and other support staff** on an independent, contracted basis to enhance our service with further specialist knowledge and experience. The agency ensures that all such staff are appropriately qualified and supervised.

All Social Workers are registered with Social Work England.

### 7.3 RECRUITING SAFELY

Nexus Fostering is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all carers, staff and those from whom it commissions a service to share this commitment.

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All staff are subject to the full range of inquiries including: -

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- Identity and Qualification confirmation
- References from previous and current employers

All independent individuals providing a service to the agency that includes contact with children and young people or access to confidential or sensitive information are appropriately checked, and required to agree to specific undertakings in respect of their conduct and practice.

All staff that undertake work for Nexus Fostering – permanent, casual, self-employed – are suitably qualified and covered by professional indemnity insurance.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

#### **HEAD OFFICE**

AND

#### **LONDON REGIONAL OFFICE**

4 Jardine House, Harrobian Business Village, Bessborough Road, Harrow HA1 3EX  
Tel: 020 8864 6040 (Main office): 020 8864 9009 (London Team)

#### **ANGLIA OFFICE**

The School House, 1 The Street, Framingham Earl, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7QY  
Tel: 01603 811118

#### **CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE**

3 Hazlewell Court, Bar Road, Lolworth, Cambridge CB23 8DS  
Tel: 01223 903 503

#### **EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL OFFICE**

Unit 26, Eldon Road Business Park, Eldon Road, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 6DZ  
Tel: 01159 815 604

#### **3 COUNTIES REGIONAL OFFICE**

7 Doolittle Mill, Butterfield, Amphill, Bedfordshire MK45 2ND  
Tel: 01462 431 774

#### **NORTH MIDLANDS REGIONAL OFFICE**

Montford House, Suite 1 & 2, St Georges Court. Donnington, Telford, TF2 7AS  
Tel: 01952 916 002

#### **SOUTH EAST REGIONAL OFFICE**

Suite 1, Ripon House, 35 Station Lane, Hornchurch, RM12 6JL  
Tel: 01708 395 708

#### **SOUTH MIDLANDS REGIONAL OFFICE INCLUDING EAST MIDLANDS**

46 Calthorpe Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TH  
Tel: 0121 427 2500

#### **SOUTH WEST REGIONAL OFFICE**

Unit A5, Elmbridge Court, Cheltenham Road East, Gloucester GL3 1JZ  
Tel: 01452 491 980

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