

Family First Fostering

Statement of Purpose



**Office No. 11
Citibase Stratford
Citygate House
246-250 Romford Road
London E7 9HZ
United Kingdom**

**Phone: 0208 221 4587
Email: placements@familyfostering.co.uk
www.foster-carers.com**

INTRODUCTION

Family First Fostering (FFF) is an innovative independent fostering agency (Limited Company) that is established to meet the needs of young people, who require quality foster placements, between the ages of 0 – 18 years of either gender.

FFF believe that every child / young person has the right to have the same opportunities as other child / young person in an environment that is nurturing, supportive and safe in enabling every child to reach their full potential, through empowering them to take control of their lives in a positive manner.

FFF provides a culturally sensitive fostering service catering for a wide selection of children including Asian, African, Caribbean Communities and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers/Refugees who can be from the European Communities. The agency also accommodates young people who are White British.

FFF was established in the hope of redressing the imbalance that some children face in the care system due to discrimination such as; sexism, racism, and other prejudices. Young people in the care system are faced with negative stereotyping which is unfortunately a reality for many young people looked after today.

FFF focuses on working with young people that that enable them to express themselves in a supportive/controlled environment, where extensive work can be carried out, both formally and informally. This in turn empowers the young person to come to terms with their emotional, educational, social and cultural needs within a family setting.

FFF works with young people, who have challenging behaviour and/or offending behaviour. The foster placement offers each young person an individualistic approach to his or her, identified needs. Part of the foster parent's role is to focus on the young person's presenting problem(s). The Placement plan is used to highlight these areas with a positive plan of action for the young person, foster parent, family, placing authority and other organisations to work towards, offering support and advice. In addition foster parents will provide positive aspects in young people's lives to ensure that this will enable them to respect differences, value diversity and empower them to take control of their lives.

Children cannot be valued unless foster parents are recognised as the important resource that they are. It is they who administer to a child's needs on a 24-hour basis and who have the capacity through the skill, commitment and care they demonstrate to transform a child's life and experiences. FFF foster parents are the single most important resource to children and young people looked after by the agency on the behalf of local authorities and need to be supported in their demanding role by the supervising social workers, social workers and the placing authority department as a whole. Training, social events, workshops, support groups, fees and allowances and regular visits all combine to assist carers in their daily care of children. Carers in turn must never underestimate the complexity of the fostering task, the neediness of many of the children for whom they will care and the memories children will carry away of the foster home in which they have lived.

A. FFF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:

- [1] To provide a safe and positive environment which represents young people and allows them to address the realities in their lives in a cultural environment that they can identify with.
- [2] To work within the boundaries of Children's Act 1989 and 2004, National Minimum Standards and The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 which form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and also to work closely with Ofsted to ensure that standards are maintained.
- [3] To provide placing authorities with monthly progress reports, when requested, on the young people placed within the Agency. To ensure that each foster child has a current Placement Plan. To supervise all placements. To carry out regular health and safety checks and risk assessments on all foster placements. To participate in all statutory reviews.
- [4] To promote and develop the young person's emotional, social, educational and cultural needs.
- [5] To break the culture of institutionalisation, whilst recognising that semi-independent training encompasses a multitude of issues in relation to living independently.
- [6] To empower the young person to come to terms with they're presenting problem; to enable them to express themselves in a positive, safe and controlled environment.
- [7] To maintain a varied and attractive program of recruitment and marketing appropriate to the needs of a diverse society so as to attract the maximum number of applicants.
- [8] To assess carers within the timescales outlined in the Department of Health Fostering Services, National Minimum Standards (2011) and through an assessment process that is rigorous and informative.
- [9] To support foster parents through a range of social events, training opportunities, support groups and visits, ensuring the meeting of standards and the promotion of good child care practice.
- [10] To positively promote and develop a fostering service that is sensitive to issues of religion, ethnicity and culture, promoting fostering from across the communities represented by the children and ensuring that placement choice is appropriate to the racial and religious origins of the child.

- [11] To consult with children, young people, foster parents and staff on their experiences of the service and on required improvements.
- [12] To work in partnership with other children, families, staff, other council departments and agencies to promote corporate parenting and secure effective outcomes for children and for foster parents.
- [13] To ensure that all foster parents and staff undertake Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and are reviewed every 3 years in line with Fostering Regulations 2011
- [14] Any changes to the statement of purpose & Children guide FFF will notify Ofsted and a copy sent within 28 days. FFF will review the Statement of Purpose annually; however this may be reviewed earlier dependent to circumstances in relation to service provision and internal audits.
- [15] FFF to ensure at all times that the service is conducted in a manner, which is consistent with its statement of purpose including any conditions for the time being in force in relation to the registration of the agency.
- [16] FFF will provide this document on request to the following:
- i) Any person working for the purpose of the fostering service
 - ii) Any foster parent or prospective foster parent of the fostering service
 - iii) Any child placed with the foster parent by the fostering service; and
 - iv) The parent of any such child.

It is the responsibility of foster parents, staff and managers to declare any information in relation to possible conflicts of interest in providing a service to the agency, and the care of children placed with FFF foster parents.

FFF believes in achieving the following OUTCOMES for children and young people:

1. Children and young people develop a positive view of themselves, emotional resilience, and an understanding of their background. They feel valued for who they are, and a full member of the fostering household.
2. Children and young people are supported in making their wishes known.
3. Children and young people enjoy sound relationships with their foster family, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.
4. Children and young people feel safe and are safe. They learn how to protect themselves, and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse and accident.
5. Children and young people want to stay put, and do not go missing from care. They achieve stability in their lives.
6. Children and young people learn to value their health, and are supported in accessing services to meet their health needs.
7. Children and young people are supported to participate in leisure and other activities, which promote their development. They make a positive contribution to the foster home and their wider community
8. Children and young people are encouraged and supported in education and achievement, in order that they can achieve their full potential.
9. Children and young people are supported in contact arrangements with people who are significant to them in order that they can maintain meaningful and supportive relationships.
10. Young people develop the skills and confidence they need to move into adult life in a way which enables them to reach their full potential and achieve economic well being.

Types of Placements

The agency offers a range of placements, which includes planned, emergency and respite care. FFF recognises that placing authorities are looking for different types of placements to meet the needs of young people in care in respect to time scale and type of placement.

Emergency placements are defined as being same day placements (within 24 hours) the agency should receive a brief synopsis of the young person's behaviour and placement history, this should be accompanied by a recent report either from the Social Worker or the last placement.

Short and medium-term placements where a child is expected to return home or move onto a permanent adoptive or foster home.

Short-term placement will be between 1 week to 3 months.
Medium – term placement will be 3 months to six months.

Long-term placements where the child/young person is expected to remain until independence

Respite placements – where the family is supported by a regular break or due to crises within the family. This is usually for 2 days up to 6 weeks.

Remand and challenging behaviour placements - These carers will have gained experience of working with young people with challenging behaviour and have received training. A number of these foster parents have experience of residential work and experience of working with challenging behaviour.

Parent and child placements. This type of placement is for young people who have become parents at a young age and who need support and guidance in caring for their own child. Often the placements are used to assess parenting skills and the ability of the parents to keep their child safe and properly cared for.

Sibling placements - Sibling placements are for brothers and sisters who are placed together in a foster care household. FFF advocates keeping siblings together within a family environment, unless it is deemed inappropriate by the placing authority.

Same-race placements. In general the FFF promotes and encourages placements reflective of a child's ethnic and religious inheritance. On occasions carers are recruited to offer care to newly-arriving and unaccompanied young people to ensure their linguistic and cultural needs are met, and for children who have been trans-racially placed, and have a poor self-image or negative attitude towards people from their own ethnic group.

Disabled children & young people placements – FFF has experienced foster parents with skills in caring for children and young people who are disabled

and / or require specialist medical care.

The Social Worker making the referral must also provide the agency with the LAC forms '**referral forms/placement information records**'. These forms should be received on the day of the placement or within twenty-four (24) hours of the placement being made.

Any shared accommodation will be agreed with the Social Worker(s) in writing.

PHILOSOPHY / PRINCIPLES OF CARE

To offer a comprehensive service focusing on children and that it is based upon good care practices and supportive management systems.

FFF works towards the positive identity for children in all aspects of daily life, the environment, parents, school and other relationships can influence their identity. Personal self-esteem is fostered by knowing who you are, this will help the individual to develop a 'purpose' and direction for the future; it is like the fountain from which you can draw upon your strengths.

FFF's dynamic philosophy will continue to be based upon the changing needs of children or young people within a culturally sensitive environment based upon positive role models and non-oppressive care practices whilst incorporating Social Work models to increase the possibility of positive outcomes. It can be said that through empowerment that it is possible to achieve change, which in turn is beneficial to the children in our care.

FFF's Principles of Good Child Care is based upon the key principles of privacy, dignity, self-fulfillment, independence, choice and rights. This is an integral of our working practices.

A. STRUCTURE OF THE AGENCY – Management and staff

Registered Individual

Managing Director/Manager

Administrator/Placement Officer

The structure will be flat until the business starts to pick up and then staff will be employed (please see the business plan).

The Managing Director has qualifications that include MBA Management, M.Sc. Sociology / Sociology and Social Administration, Dip SW Social Work, Diploma Higher Education, B.A. Hons Economics.

Also, there is a Panel team responsible for the assessment and approval of foster parents across the Agency. A dedicated referrals team is responsible for the processing and matching of placements in accordance with legislation and internal standards. Also the team is responsible for the recruitment, development, health and safety and payments to foster parents.

In addition to permanent staff, there are others who work for the agency on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of roles including Panel members, Form F assessors and support workers.

All casual or self-employed workers are required to hold appropriate qualifications and will have previous experience related to the work they are undertaking. FFF carries out a range of pre-employment checks on all staff including references and telephone follow-up calls, enhanced CRB check / disclosure to ensure the welfare and safety of children.

We use certified accounts services the Agency may commission qualified, experienced consultants from time to time who will give advice and guidance regarding best practices regarding the service provision at the agency.

The staffing team caters for the diverse needs of the foster parents and young people. All staff & Foster parents are trained via our in-house and external Training Courses which cover all aspects of Good Child Care Practice in relation to Looked after Children, working with young people with Challenging Behaviour, Fostering Regulations 2011 and the Children Act 1989.

All staff receives monthly supervision with their line manager or other designated senior person; records of these meetings will be kept detailing agreed action and timescales. This should be in accordance with the organisation's supervision policy.

All staff are appraised within the first six (6) months of their employment and annually thereafter. This is to assess with the member of staff their development during their probationary period and then each year thereafter. This will also identify how the organisation can support the staff member reaching their full potential. This will be reviewed in supervision.

STATEMENT OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The resources allocated to the organisation as indicated in the cash flow analysis and business plan indicates that we are able to carry to out the aims and objectives of the organisation as set out in the statement of purpose.

B. CURRENT NO. FOSTER PARENTS: 8

C. CURRENT CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT: 12

D. SERVICES OFFERED:

FFF caters for children between the ages of 0 – 18 years of either gender.

- [a] Outreach work (courts, Immigration, Schools/colleges, shopping, & families)
- [b] One to one discussions
- [c] Education (support with homework and other set educational tasks, where necessary liaison with schools / colleges / education centers)
- [d] Culture / identity awareness
- [e] Drug / alcohol / substance awareness
- [f] Providing recreational / leisure activities
- [g] Reports, (assessment, progress, incident & Management investigations)
- [h] Working with offending behaviour
- [i] Family contact work
- [j] Health care awareness (Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Hospitals)
- [k] Gender awareness
- [l] Maintaining the Boundaries of the placement / respecting the local community
- [m] Equal Opportunities / Diversity
- [n] Resettlement for new arrivals to the UK
- [o] Support during applications for asylum/refugee status as well as liaising closely with the Immigration Authorities and other relevant agencies.
- [p] Semi-independence Training

E. HEALTH PROMOTION:

Each young person placed with in a foster placement will be registered with doctors and dental / optician appointments will be made for them within three weeks from the start of the placement with the foster parent. There will of course be an element of choice therein with young people being in a position to maintain their original General practitioners (if practicable).

Health promotion is also undertaken by our foster parents who endeavour to develop and enhance the individual young person's knowledge and awareness of the different health care aspects and ensuring that they have a better understanding of issues relating to health care / promotion. This is achieved through discussions with the foster parent and allocated social worker.

A health record is kept on each young person and every effort is made to obtain a medical history on each young person which will include, health needs, development, illnesses, operations, immunisations, allergies, medications administered dates and appointments with GP's and other specialists.

F. CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING:

A comprehensive Child Protection Policy is in operation at FFF. This is because it is fully recognised that children and young people who are looked after are vulnerable and our responsibility as a caring organisation is to provide a safe and caring environment from which young people grow and develop. Therefore, our policy is that the child should always be believed in cases where an allegation of abuse is made. Our first priority in cases like this is to protect the child or young person from the alleged perpetrator. It is of paramount importance that the child or young making the allegation is reassured by the foster parent / staff team at FFF and supported at all times.

Child protection investigations will be conducted within the remit of working together within a multi-disciplinary approach. This therefore will include investigations that are either or a combination of internal, criminal and/or external, in nature. A comprehensive Child Protection Policy supports this work.

This should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy / Procedural guidelines. A copy is available on request.

G. FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE:

FFF will ensure that all foster parents homes are fitted with a minimum of 2 smoke detectors. Foster parent's evacuation procedure is part of their Health & Safety check, and is explained to all new placements.

H. RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION:

Religion is very important to FFF, and it is part of the referral / admission process to have as much information about the young person being placed in foster care including religion, culture and language. The foster parent and FFF staff team will actively seek to promote that young person's religion by using resources within the vicinity of the placement and the community as a whole. For example, Religious reading matter and equipment will be supplied to meet the religious needs of the young person placed in the foster placement. If a young person makes the decision not to practice their religion, this choice will also be honoured.

I. CONTACT WITH YOUNG PERSON:

It is FFF's Policy that contacts with a young person, by family, persons with parental responsibility and friends should be promoted both by telephone, in person and/or written and any other mediums deemed appropriate.

Where the young person's family is not residing in the UK all efforts will be made (with the consent of the young person) by the foster parent together with the Social Worker to make contact with the relatives abroad. This is achieved through working closely with the relevant organisations that specialise and are equipped to follow this through.

This should be agreed within the Placement Plan with the young person and with other agencies. Agreed contact arrangements with those with parental responsibility will be recorded on the young person's file.

Contact with family and people with parental responsibility will be advised either by telephone calls or by the young people visiting their family, (and in some cases escorted to their family). Also an open invitation can be communicated to family to visit the foster placement any time if this is appropriate.

J. CARE AND CONTROL:

FFF's follows the strict guidelines set by the Children's Act 1989, Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Regulations 2011.

All sanctions are agreed by the foster parent and should be relayed to the Social Worker and persons with parental responsibility (where applicable). No sanction is imposed unless it is discussed with the young person and only then, as a last resort. All Foster parents are given the guidance on permissible sanctions.

All hazardous materials are securely locked away and are not accessible to the young people in the home without foster parent's supervision.

This must be read in conjunction with the Principles of Good Child Care Policy, Care & Control Policy and Procedures and is available on request.

K. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:

FFF's follows a set of Guidelines when a young person is absent without permission. Before a young person leaves the foster placement, the foster parent has to ascertain where they are going and what time they are expected back. They are reminded of the appropriate times to be back in the home. If they are going to be late, they are encouraged to telephone and state what time they would be back.

Should the young person leave the placement without permission, fail to contact the foster parent or return to the placement at the appointed time then they would be reported missing.

Curfews - All young people who are on police or court curfew are constantly reminded of the consequences of breaking their curfews. At FFF we believe, it is imperative that the young people are aware of the dangers of going missing and that they understand the seriousness of keeping to their curfews.

The procedures below for missing / or breaking of curfews is as follows:

- [i] Family is contacted (where applicable)
- [ii] Police are contacted and missing forms are completed
- [iii] Duty Social Worker is contacted.
- [iv] Police collect missing form
- [v] Information is recorded in the foster parent's file / diary
- [vi] Report to the agency

When the young person returns to the placement he/she is engaged in a discussion with the foster parent on the dangers of missing. The above agencies are contacted, informing them of their safe return.

This must be read in conjunction with the Unauthorised Absence Policy and Procedures and is available on request.

L REPRESENTATION AND COMPLAINTS

On admission at the placement, each young person is given a copy of the "Young Person's/ Children's Handbook" which has details of the "Young Person's/ Children's Complaints Procedure", the Home Rules as well as useful information relating to FFF. The "Handbook will be discussed fully with the young person to ensure that they have a full understanding of the foster home rules and their rights to complain.

It is also brought to their attention that they can contact their foster parent, allocated Social Worker, Supervising social worker or Ofsted at:

- Ofsted:
By post: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
By Telephone: 0300 123 1231
By email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

- The Voice of the Child in Care' (VCC) /Independent Advocate:
0808 800 5792
- Children's Right's Director:

Write to:

Office of the Children's Rights Director
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

FREEPHONE 0800 528 0731
Email: theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.rights4me.org

The reviewing officer's details also will be given to the child.

FFF is supported by a full procedural document pertaining to representations and complaints.

This must be read in conjunction with the complaints procedure and is available on request.

M. EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Every young person accommodated are supported to secure a place in an educational establishment, if applicable they supported in seeking employment. Schools/colleges in the area would be contacted at once and an appointment would be made for the young person to attend a local school college or training centre. Young people are encouraged to attend Connections in order to look at all the available options open to them.

Foster parents offer support to all young people before, during (if applicable) and after interviews to ensure that full support and guidance is given to the young person, as well as enhancing their interview skills and confidence.

Education is viewed as being the way forward for young people. Each young person must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is devised by their Social Worker in conjunction with school/college, the young person, agency and the foster parent. Part of the ethos of FFF is that young people living within foster placements will actively take part in some form of education or vocational training in order to prepare them for independent living.

N. SEMI INDEPENDENT LIVING

Aims of Semi-Independence Training:

- To provide a safe environment for the young people to learn and enhance their skills and knowledge in preparation for them living independently.
- To develop the young person's awareness about Government systems and community services, so that they can represent themselves as and when necessary.
- To ensure the young person recognises and develops their social skills to enable them to integrate into communities and society as a whole.
- To enhance/develop the young person's interpersonal skills so that they can make and sustain friendships.
- To enable the young person to acquire knowledge and skills in household maintenance and money management.
- To ensure the young person develops the necessary competencies with regards to employment and further education.

Pathway Plans will state the level of support a young person will need to achieve their progression from the age of 16 years to 21 years. The Pathway Plans will address the semi-independence programme that meets the needs of the young person. The aim of the semi independence programme is to ensure that as far as is possible young people are prepared for independence so that when they leave foster care they are ready to take their place in the community with a sense of pride and strength.

O. REVIEWS:

At the time of admission, it is made clear that the young person should have a planning meeting review within 72 hours of their admission. The planning meeting can take place during the admission process. A review must take place within four weeks of admission, and then one in three months time and again six months afterwards, (this is a statutory obligation).

The young person, family or persons with parental responsibility and other agencies must be invited to the review. The Placement Plan should be discussed and if needed modified. Future plans should be made clear to all present with the needs and wishes of the young person being taken into account.

P. CULTURE:

Culture is viewed as being essential to the development of the young people being placed with FFF carers as well as identifying positive role models.

FFF acknowledges and supports the celebration of all cultures and religious observations.

Q. WORKING WITH UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKERS:

Another feature of FFF is that we are able to carry out intensive work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Refugees. We have worked successfully with young people who have recently arrived in the UK after having had some most traumatic experiences in their country of origin.

Paramount importance is placed on supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Young refugee people placed with us to settle smoothly into the British System without losing sight of their origins and cultural values. Based on the premise that knowledge is power, commitment is given to ensuring that Young people seeking asylum status are provided with the support, information and advice that they rightly deserve. To that end, comprehensive liaison work is carried out with the allocated Social Worker of the young person, Solicitors and Panel Advisers from the Refugee Council. Also, every attempt is made to encourage the tracing of and maintenance of contact with family members, relations and friends of the young person both here in Britain and abroad.

FFF has been successful in its work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Young Refugee people and are thus able to offer a sensitive service in this area.

R. LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND OF FOSTER PARENTS

In addition to foster parents competence, skills and experience, foster parents recruited at FFF are from a variety of cultural backgrounds. This is due to the diversity of cultures and religious beliefs of young people that are placed in foster care

This aims at ensuring that:

1. The young person has the opportunity as far, as is practicable to retain and develop the linguistic language of their birth according to his wishes;

2. The young person has opportunities, which may arise that foster parents (who speak their first language) can share and have a sympathetic ear;
3. The young person has the opportunity to practise his religion in a safe and acceptable environment;
4. Foster parents have a considerable amount of knowledge of the cultural, linguistic and cultural background of the young people in their care.

S. WORKING IN AN ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY WAY

The organisation believes in empowering young people to enable them to make choices in their lives, based upon informed choices. This is achieved through role models and respecting diversity and reaffirming the strengths of others in appositve and constructive manner.

The approach to diversity forms part of the fostering service's commitment to equal opportunities generally. The service provision positively endorses FFF's equal opportunity statement.

No applicant will be discriminated against on the grounds of sexuality, age, gender, religion, marital status, colour, ethnicity or national origins, ability or disability etc. All applications to foster will be considered on merit and with the interests of looked after children in mind.

All foster parents are expected to treat children as individuals and to be responsive to needs arising from sexuality, religion, culture, gender etc. They are expected to ensure that children have the opportunity for as broad a range of positive experience as possible and the chance to develop interests and skills outside of any rigid assumptions linked to gender or culture.

Disabled children have the same rights to a secure family life as any child. The service will actively seek to secure families for all children and to facilitate respite care fostering placements for eligible families.

Gay and lesbian young people will be supported in dealing with the issues their sexuality may bring – including having access to a gay or lesbian foster parent if such a resource is requested by them and assessed as being in their best interests.

The particular vulnerability of looked after children to abuse or ill treatment is evidenced by research and case examples. The service will therefore be especially mindful of the need to ensure safeguarding practices during recruitment of foster parents the placement of individual children and the monitoring systems put in place post placement.

Active steps will be taken to recruit specifically from any community where looked after children are over-represented and to ensure that carers from such groups have access to culturally appropriate support as well as universal provision.

T. SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOUR

FFF recognises that a young person may cause self-harm to him/herself, while at the placement. It is vital that the foster parents are aware that this is often a 'cry for help' by the young person and in some cases can be seen as a form of attention seeking.

If it is suspected that a young person is causing harm to himself or herself action must be taken in accordance with the Child Protection policy / procedure guidelines.

All foster parents must take self-harming behaviour seriously; foster parents are expected to recognise changes in a young person's behaviour, which may lead to self-harm due to emotional and physical distress and identify with signs and indicators that the young person may be capable of causing harm to them.

The young person must be given as much support and reassurance as possible to try and protect them from causing any further harm to him/herself. The welfare of the child / young person is of paramount importance.

U. RECRUITMENT OF CARERS

FFF has a comprehensive recruitment policy in regards to foster parents. This is to ensure that all carers are treated in an equal manner and that there is a clear process that will enable all prospective foster parents to follow and understand to make an informed decision if they wish to be foster parents.

There is a rigorous recruitment process to ensure that all prospective foster parents have all the checks required to protect children and that the assessment undertaken is a comprehensive one. The assessment process is broken down into 2 stages as explained in initial enquiries form sent to foster carers and also in recruitment of foster carers policy.

IRM is a review process which prospective or existing Foster Carers can use if they do not agree with the Qualifying Determination given to them by their Fostering Service provider. This means the outcome made by the Fostering Service provider that it does not propose to approve a person as suitable to foster or proposes to terminate or change the terms of approval of an existing Carer. It would be hoped that most difficulties and disagreements would be resolved prior to reaching this stage.

V. APPROVAL OF FOSTER PARENTS.

FFF meets the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Part 5 and section 27, in relation to the approval of Foster parents by having a Fostering Panel that will determine if a prospective foster parent will be recommended for approval and the information required for the assessment of the prospective foster parent as in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Section 26 (Assessment of prospective foster parents) and Section 27 (Approval of Foster parents).

W. TRAINING AND SUPPORTING FOSTER PARENTS.

FFF provides training for foster parents; this includes pre-approval (skills to foster) and induction training for each carer, including opportunities to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing carers. This will be achieved through meetings where experiences are discussed and also the exchange on contact details if required.

All training undertaken will fit with in the organisations equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice. All training must take into account the needs of the foster

parents in relation to days, times, and child care arrangements for the training to occur.

As part of our training and assessment framework which incorporates the Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards, all prospective foster parents are required to attend Skills to Foster training prior to their approval. Sessions take place over 3 full days and are held on a regular basis throughout the year.

The basic subjects covered in these sessions are:

Promoting sense of identity, Managing difficult behaviour, Working in partnership with birth parents and other professionals, Legislative framework, Child development, Attachment and loss, Safe caring, why children come into care, Awareness of child abuse and child protection issues, Diversity – challenging discrimination, moving on

FFF has an on-going training program that covers areas that are necessary such as, safe caring, child protection, first aid and other training. Also, training identified by the carers and supervising social worker, this is to strengthen any weaknesses identified and to promote their self – development skills to enable them to provide quality care to children and young people in placement. There is an expectation that all carers will attend training on a regular basis. Failure to attend without good reason may lead to approval status eventually being withdrawn.

As part of on-going professional development, carers who demonstrate a commitment to training and completion of the TSD workbook are offered the Opportunity to undertake NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People (or its equivalent).

Training of foster parents will be reviewed annually and where necessary changes will be made to improve the service provided.

Training is provided twice, once on a weekday and another on a weekend to suit all foster parents to enable them to attend.

FFF offers comprehensive support to the foster parents, this consists of supervising foster parents to ensure that they are able to provide quality care to foster children and understand their role, responsibilities and duties as a foster parent

All foster parents sign the Foster Care Agreement in line with schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. FFF will ensure that all necessary information is provided for foster parents to carry out their functions effectively.

FFF also provides a handbook for foster parents that cover areas such as, policies and procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance. This will be updated periodically in consultation with foster parents.

All foster parents receive regular supervision from their allocated supervising social worker, this is recorded and covers areas necessary to improve and provide a quality service to foster children.

X. Reviews and terminations of approvals of Foster parents.

FFF has a comprehensive policy on reviewing foster parents, as per the Fostering Regulations 2011, Regulation 28, in which it is the organisation's responsibility to carry out a review of all foster parents approved by the agency and must take place

not more than a year after approval and thereafter whenever the fostering service provider consider it necessary, but at intervals of not more than a year.
FFF will follow the terminations of approval policy as per the specification under the Section 28.

Recommendations will be passed on to the decision maker for approvals or for re-approvals by the panel on 1st reviews and by the IRO on subsequent reviews. The managing director or the directors of FFF are the decision makers for the Agency.

November 2013