

FITZGERALD FOSTERING AND CONSULTANCY LTD

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction and Context.

This Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives of Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd and provides an overview of the services offered by the company. It has been written in accordance, and giving regard to the relevant regulations, legislation and guidance including:

- The Fostering Service Regulations 2011, amended July 2013 and April 2014.
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011).
- The Care Standards Act 2000.
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) 2015
- The Children Act 1989.
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review 2010.
- Delegation of Authority: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review 2010 (July 2013).
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (2011).
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendment to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Vol 4: Fostering Services (July 2013).
- The Children and Families Act 2014.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd internal policies and procedures.

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to, or made available upon request to:

- Ofsted.
- Any local authority or organisation placing a child/young person with Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd.
- Any child/young person (according to their age and understanding) placed with a carer approved by Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd.
- Any person working with or for Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd including foster carers.

- The parent, legal guardian, or anyone with Parental Responsibility for any child placed with a foster carer approved by Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd.

In accordance with regulations this Statement of Purpose will be updated and reviewed at least annually and more frequently than this if required.

Aims and Objectives.

The overriding aim of Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd is to provide a comprehensive, high quality range of foster placements, with approved carers, for children and young people who are unable to live within their families of origin on a short term or longer-term basis.

We aim to provide a safe environment where children and young people have the opportunity to express their wishes and views and where they feel safe, listened to, and respected.

We believe that all children and young people needing substitute care have the right to live within a safe and nurturing family environment which meets their needs throughout childhood, and which enables them to meet their full potential as they move on into adulthood.

We aim to promote positive experiences in the foster home which will encourage children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, achieve their potential, enjoy leisure activities, make a positive contribution, and ultimately assist them to achieve economic well-being.

Objectives Include.

When making placements for children and young people we will give due consideration to culture, language, gender, religion, sexuality, disability, ability etc. Providing care that is led by the identified needs and care plans of the children and young people placed and that focuses on giving them opportunities and support that enables them to meet their full potential in all areas.

In order to achieve this, we work within the requirements of the child's Care Plan and Placement Agreement that are subject to review. Carers are given all the information we have in relation to the children they care for and are fully involved in contributing to the Care Planning process and ensuring that the day-to-day care needs of the child are met appropriately.

We aim to work in partnership and consult with children, young people, their families, foster carers, local authorities, other relevant agencies, professionals, and organisations in order to meet the needs of children placed.

We regard carers as members of the professional care team. Being committed to recruiting carers from a wide range of backgrounds and experience and providing them with appropriate support, training, supervision, advice, and resources necessary to enable them to offer high quality care to children and young people placed.

Services Provided.

Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd will aim to develop and provide a wide range of foster placements for children aged from 0 to 18 years. This will include short term, bridging, emergency, respite, long term foster placements and parent and child placements. The service will aim to offer flexible resources to meet the needs of individual children and work effectively with their care plans.

In supporting the primary task of the service, we will also provide the following:

- Robust initial screening of potential carers.
- Comprehensive home study assessments of potential carers that will be undertaken by qualified experienced staff.
- Completion of required checks and references.
- Thorough pre-approval training for carers.
- Post approval - completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers within 12 months of approval.
- Ongoing, post approval training to enable carers to understand the holistic needs of the children they care for so that the children can achieve their full potential and best outcomes possible.
- Provision of experienced foster panels.
- Named qualified supervising social worker.
- Attendance, support and contributions to meetings and events relating to children placed.
- Annual reviews for all approved carers.
- 24-hour advice line support.
- Carer support groups.
- Clear payment system for foster carers.
- Considered matching of placements.
- Clear policies and procedures relating to practice and care issues.
- Membership of Fostering Network.

Service Development.

Service development will be considered in the context of information gathered via a variety of mechanisms to include: children's consultation; foster carer's consultation; placing social workers and LA feedback; foster carers training and development needs; Looked After Children's Reviews; team meetings; Foster Panel; and any changes to regulatory requirements or policy development.

Status and Constitution.

Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd was registered by Ofsted on 05/12/2008 as required by the Care Standards Act 2000. It is a small independent fostering agency that was established by James Townend and Lesley Fitzgerald in July 2007.

It is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company registration Number 6327613). Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd is committed to providing quality, good value, affordable foster placements that are child focused and in which children and young people feel safe, valued, listened to and respected.

The Directors of the company will work in co-operation with each other, will meet regularly and have responsibility for determining

- The agency's strategic vision
- Annual business plan and review system.
- Performance targets.
- Financial management and expenditure.
- Development issues.
- Quality assurance.
- Policies and procedures.
- Values, principals and culture of the organisation.
- Compliance with legislation and standards.

Management Structure.

James Townend = Responsible Individual

Lesley Fitzgerald = Registered Manager

Numbers, Relevant Qualifications and Experience of Staff

James Townend has worked in social care settings for 25 years. This has included: Working as a Residential Child Care Officer and Manager; Duty and Referral Team Social Worker and Manager; Working as a Child Protection Co-coordinator and Independent Reviewing Officer;

Managing Child Protection and Independent Reviewing Services; and a Service Manager of Children's Services. Since establishing Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd with Lesley Fitzgerald in 2007, James has worked for several authorities offering consultation and interim management cover in respect of safeguarding services. This has included: managing strategic and operational processes; chairing child protection conferences; chairing a serious case review panel for a large county; and specific pieces of work such as the delivery of training and undertaking case reviews.

Lesley Fitzgerald has worked in social care settings with looked after children since 1984. She has worked as a Residential Child Care Officer, Residential Team Leader, Deputy Officer in Charge and as a Unit Manager. From March 2000 to March 2008, she was the Fostering Team Manager for Slough Borough Council with responsibility for short-term fostering, private fostering, home from home short break scheme for disabled children and supported lodgings. From March 2002 to March 2008, she was the registered manager for the above services. From March 2008 to April 2009, she was the Interim Team Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Respite Services at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Since then she has managed a leaving care team, children in care team, undertaken a corporate parenting project manager role and has been an IRO.

As well as James Townend and Lesley Fitzgerald the company employs a fulltime supervising social worker and uses an additional 2 independent social workers to cover the supervision of carers and Form F assessments. Foster carer reviews and the agency's training programme, and practice development are led and facilitated by a therapist.

Numbers of foster carer's, Numbers of children placed, Numbers of complaints and their outcomes.

As at 31.03.21 there are 19 sets of foster carers approved. The total number of placements available with these carers is 47.

As at 31.03.21 there are 23 children in placement and three young people staying put, meaning the agency currently has 15 vacancies. Although a number of these vacancies would not be available to placing authorities because of matching considerations.

There has been one complaint in the last year from a young person about the care they received from the foster carer they were placed with. This complaint was investigated fully by an independent social worker within 28 days of its receipt. The outcome was that the complaint was not upheld.

The procedures and processes for recruiting, approving, training, supporting and reviewing carers.

When a prospective carer makes contact, there will be an initial discussion regarding requirements and seeking basic information. The applicant may be ruled out at this stage if they do not meet basic requirements e.g., they do not have a bedroom available for fostering.

If the applicant appears suitable and wishes to continue an information pack is sent. Following this an initial visit is arranged. This is in effect a screening visit to provide the applicant with more information about the fostering task and to gain more information about the applicant's suitability to foster.

The applicant will be given time to reflect on the information and make contact if they wish to proceed. If the applicant wishes to proceed and is suitable to proceed, they will be invited to attend the "Skills to Foster" training sessions. This training pre-approval will be reported on by the group leaders and will contribute to the assessment should prospective carers go on to apply to be assessed.

Following this, applicants will be given an application form and invited to take a couple of weeks to reflect on the training and what they have to offer, what impact fostering will have on them, and their family and lifestyle.

If the application progresses statutory checks will be undertaken (with the applicant's permission), which will include:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Checks
- Local Authority checks.
- Employer References.
- Medical reports.
- References from all previous employment involving children.
- Personal references (at least 3).
- Health and Safety Check.
- Pet Assessment.

If during part 1 of the assessment a significant concern is identified from the checks and references the assessment will be stopped.

An experienced social worker will be allocated to undertake the home study assessment which represents part 2 of the assessment process. Part 1 and part 2 of the assessment are often run concurrently. The process is clearly outlined to applicants so that they are aware that even though part 2 has been initiated an outcome from a part 1 check that suggests they are unsuitable to foster would lead to the whole assessment being halted.

Part 2 of the assessment will require a minimum of 8 visits and will be completed jointly and in co-operation with the prospective carers. The home study assessment will take account of the views of everyone living in the household.

Applicants will be considered active participants in the assessment process. They will be encouraged to make written and verbal contributions to their assessment.

When the assessment has been completed it will be shared in its entirety with the applicants before being presented to foster panel (this will not include third party information e.g., references).

Prospective carer's will be expected to attend panel and to bring a supporter if they wish.

Panel will make recommendations in relation to the applicant's suitability to foster and their approval status, which will include;

- The type of fostering
- Number of children
- age range
- gender
- Any specific matching criteria, including limitations.

The recommendations of the panel will be referred to the Agency Decision Maker for the final outcome and carers will be informed of the Agency Decision Maker's decision in writing.

If the applicants are approved a supervising social worker will be allocated (if different from the worker undertaking the assessment), and a foster carer's agreement will be issued.

Carer's will be reviewed on an annual basis unless a significant event requires an earlier review. The first review will go to foster panel for consideration.

Training and Support.

Carers will be required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers within the first year of approval. An extensive programme of ongoing training will also be provided.

Training will be provided to:

- Help carers become better at the fostering task.
- Improve knowledge, develop and enhance skills.
- Ensure that carers are confident and competent in caring safely for and meeting the needs of children.
- Encourage carers to take responsibility for their own development in the fostering task.

Training will be provided in a variety of forms including one to one and group sessions and individual study time.

All our training focuses on the attachment needs of the child, the importance of the relationship with the child and the need to provide children with opportunities and experiences that promote resilience and good outcomes for them.

Complaints and Representations.

All children, young people, foster carers, individuals and organisations using Fitzgerald Fostering and Consultancy Ltd services, either directly or indirectly, will be encouraged to make effective representations about any aspect of the service. They will be provided with written information about the organisation's complaints procedures, including the contact details of Ofsted. Additionally, all complaints, and the management and outcomes of them, will be appropriately recorded. The organisation will monitor complaints and produce an annual summary for inclusion in the Statement of Purpose. If required, an independent person will be brought in to investigate a complaint that cannot be resolved internally for whatever reason.

Lesley Fitzgerald

Registered Manager

April 2021