



FSG



Statement of Purpose and Function

FSG

FSG Limited

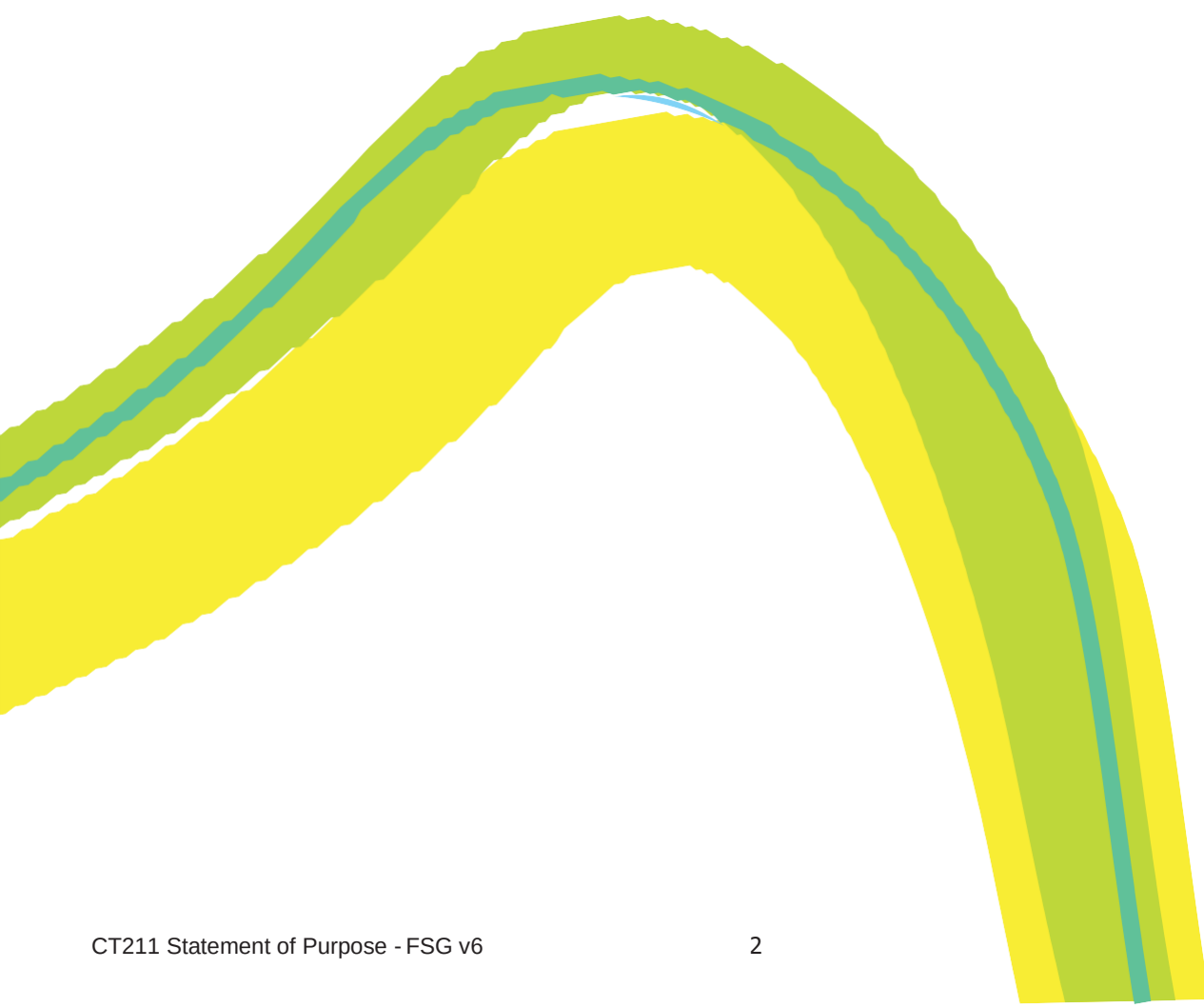
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www.fosteringsupportgroup.com



CareTech

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1. Introduction

This statement of purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (2013 changes / amendments)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011
- The Children Act 1989, 2004

The Statement of Purpose produced in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulation 2011 includes:

- A statement of the Aims and Objectives of the fostering service
- A statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is available on our website and / or made available upon request to:

- Ofsted
- Local Authorities using our services
- Any person working for the agency
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer
- Any child or young person placed with the agency

The Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by the agency's Management Team.

2. About Fostering Support Group Ltd (FSG)

Fostering Support Group Ltd was set up by two foster carers in 1989. The agency was one of the first independent fostering services to provide placements to Local Authorities and the agency recruited foster carers mostly in South London, Kent and Sussex.

In 2005 the agency was acquired by Care UK; the fundamental service of the agency continued but the agency changed names to become Care UK Children's Services. In December 2010 the agency was acquired by CareTech Ltd and the agency changed names to become CareTech Foster Care Ltd. The two name-changes have led to some confusion over the years and in May 2012 a decision was made to revert back to the agency's original name namely Fostering Support Group Ltd (also known as FSG).

FSG has one office in Shortlands, South London.

The agency received an overall rating of 'Good' in its last Ofsted inspection on 17th June 2022 achieving 'Good' in all inspection areas including Outcomes for children and young people and Safeguarding.

The agency is managed by a team of experienced, qualified professionals who provide an innovative and needs-led service for children and young people in foster care.

3. Our Mission Statement

A national service supporting the local needs of our Customers, by promoting safe and sustainable placements which nurture and develop Young People and Families.



4. Aims & Objectives

We aim to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment to young people in our care. We believe that young people should be provided with opportunities to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

FSG's key objective is to develop services in order that children and young people can develop and grow within the five key outcomes of 'Every Child matters' which are:

1. **Stay Safe** - We recognise that all young people need to be safe and well cared for and we will actively seek to minimise behaviours that are risky and unsafe for children
2. **Be Healthy** - We will actively seek to support the health planning for children and promote healthy lifestyles for young people in foster care. We will seek to promote the psychological well-being of children looked after by providing therapy and counselling
3. **Enjoy and Achieve** - We will actively seek to promote education for looked after children by ensuring that carers understand the importance of learning and ensure all children receive all the appropriate help and support they need within school and education
4. **Make a Positive Contribution** - We recognise that it is essential that young people feel part of and are integrated into the wider community, whether via clubs, or integration through the carer's social networks and families
5. **Achieve Economic Wellbeing** - We recognise that young people need to be supported in acquiring the appropriate life skills to flourish in the wider community. The agency via its foster carers will support young people to seek out further education and employment where appropriate

FSG aims to provide:

- High quality care for children and young people in a family setting that reflects values, individual needs and differences
- Continuity in the lives of children and young people so their identity and education can be maintained and developed, their physical and mental well-being promoted and their full potential achieved
- Continuous therapeutic support for both looked after children and their carers
- A commitment to a child / young person as a unique individual with unique needs
- 24-hour support for foster carers and children / young people
- A commitment to the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds so that FSG can offer appropriate placements for children and young people
- A commitment to the ongoing learning and development of foster carers
- Matching consideration for the gender; race, religion, sexuality and disability of fostered children and young people when making a placement
- Stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to fulfil their potential
- A safe and protective environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and to be encouraged, nurtured and supported
- A dialogue with the children and young people we care for; along with carers and their families, in recognition of the contribution they can make in evaluating and developing the service we provide



5. Status and Constitution

FSG is an independent fostering provider and a limited company registered under the Companies Act 1989 (Company Registration Number 05185612).

In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989, FSG has produced a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association and copies of these have been made available to the government commissions which regulate independent fostering agencies and children's social care throughout the UK.

FSG is:

- Regulated by Ofsted (URN SC388487)
- Registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service
- A Pan London Contractor since 2002 (London Care Placements)
- An Investors in People organisation since 2000
- A corporate member of the Fostering Network
- A corporate member of CoramBAAF
- Data Protection registered (Reg. no: Z559357X)

The agency has organisational membership with:

- CoramBAAF
- Foster Talk
- Fostering Network (membership No: 529)

All foster carers have full membership and legal cover with FosterTalk.

6. Management Structure & Staffing

The FSG Management Team:

The company is managed through two operating divisions and supported by a headquarters team based in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.

The parent company, CareTech, has a Board of Directors which comprises of:

- Farouq Sheikh - Executive Chairman
- Haroon Sheikh - Chief Executive Officer

The Board is chaired by Farouq Sheikh with the support of three independent non-Executive Directors. The executive management team also includes 8 Directors.

FSG is supported by the Children and Young People Divisional Team comprising of:

- Patricia Jarrett Managing Director
- Bev Senior – Service Director/Responsible Individual CareTech Fostering Division
- Sarah O'Donnell – Head of Finance

FSG has a management team comprising of:

- Jean Smith – Head of Service / Registered Manager
- Shelleyne Munroe – Practice Manager
- Shakila Bhaker – Admin Manager
- Rebecca Gill – Fostering Assessment and Quality Assurance Manager

Trish Casemore is responsible to Haroon Sheikh and Haroon Sheikh is responsible to the Chairman and the Corporate Directors at CareTech.

Jean Smith and Beverley Senior hold Social Work qualifications and are registered with the Regulatory body Social Work England. They have various management experiences.

The Management team is responsible for:

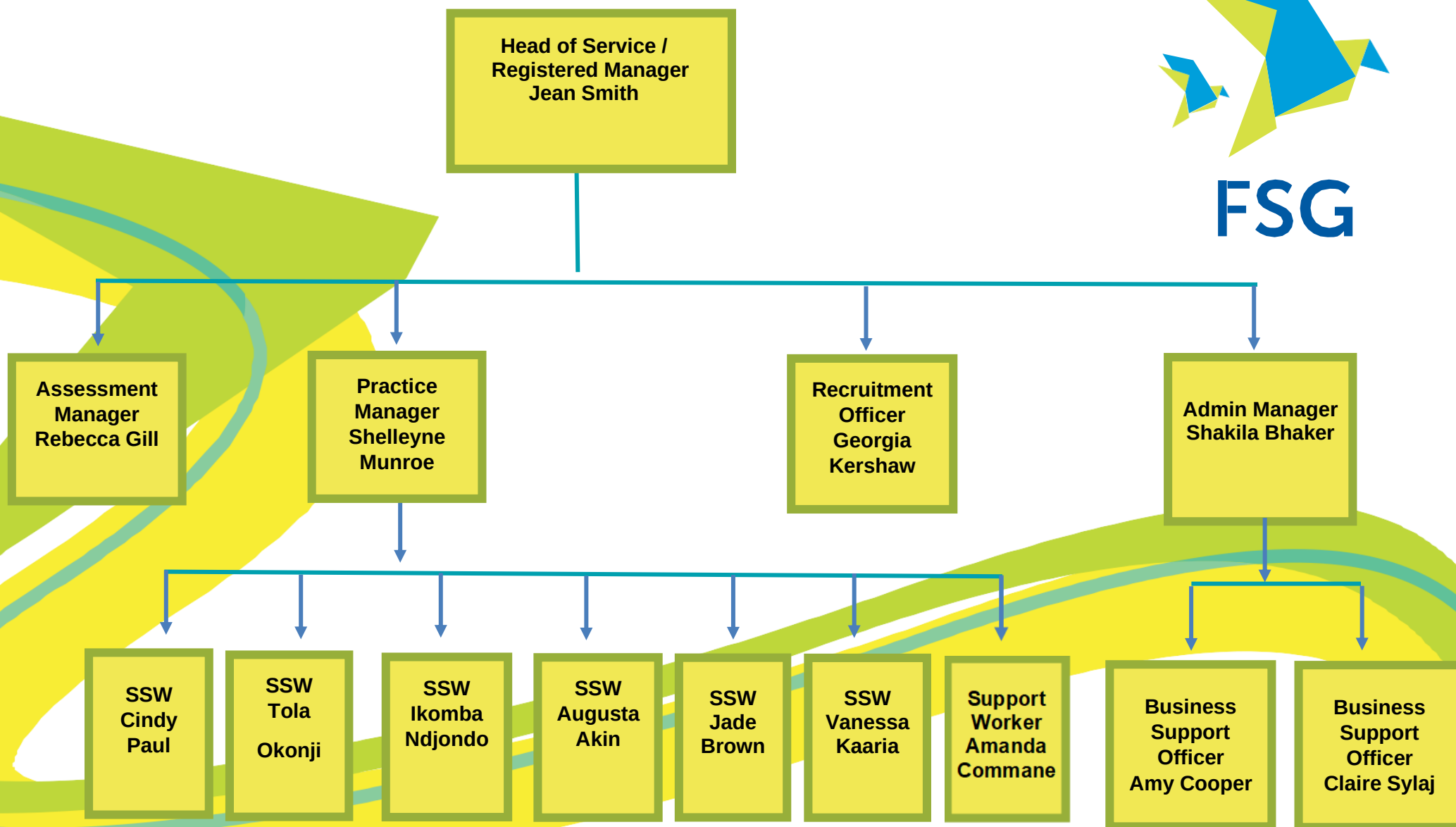
- The organisation's vision and mission
- Quality standards & management systems
- Fulfilling statutory duties and responsibilities
- The values to be promoted throughout the agency
- The strategic direction and goals of the organisation
- The training, supervision & development of staff and foster carers
- The organisation's policies and procedures
- The annual business & development plan
- Major financial expenditure decisions

Staffing

FSG has 9 full-time and 4 part time staff who manage the day-to-day operations and consist of:

- Head of Service / Registered Manager
- Practice Manager
- 1 Administration Manager
- 1 Assessment Manager
- 5 Supervising Social Workers
- 2 Business Support Officers
- 1 Recruitment and Marketing Coordinator.
- 1 Support Worker
- All Supervising Social Workers are qualified and hold formal qualifications
- All Supervising Social Workers are registered with the Regulatory body Social Work England
- All staff are covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance and have job descriptions, contracts of employment and induction training
- All staff receive monthly supervision, training and an annual staff appraisal
- All staff have had the required statutory checks undertaken

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



7. The Fostering Panel

FSG's fostering panel central list consists of diverse members with backgrounds in child-care, education, health, fostering, law and a care experienced young person. The panel-chair is an independent member and the composition of the panel complies with the National Minimum Standards 2011. The panel convenes according to the needs of the agency and all members have received induction and further training.

The Panel considers:

- Each application for approval as a foster carer and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer
- Where it recommends approval of an application, it recommends the terms on which approval is to be given
- Whether or not to recommend a person suitable to remain acting as a foster carer and whether or not the terms of approval remain appropriate;
 - (i) On the first review within or on 12 months of initial approval
 - (ii) On the occasion of any other review when requested to do so by FSG

In addition, the panel also comments on the reviewing procedures and monitors its effectiveness. They also oversee the conduct of assessments and make recommendations on such matters or cases as the fostering service may refer to it.

The Fostering Panel can only make recommendations as it is the Agency Decision Maker who makes a formal decision. This process takes seven working days. The Agency Decision Maker is the CareTech Quality and Safeguarding Manager who is a qualified social worker with many years' experience in the social work field.

It is FSG's policy:

- That all first reviews are presented to panel
- That all foster carers are invited to attend panel for their first annual review
- That all foster carers are invited to attend panel where there has been a serious complaint, allegation, significant change of circumstance or where they or the agency feel it important for panel scrutiny
- That all carers and applicants who attend panel are informed of their right to appeal and the process for doing so
- That all applicants seeking approval are invited to attend panel alongside their assessor

Information on the panel composition is sent to all carers and applicants prior to their attendance at panel. A guide on the panel-process is also sent before panel; after panel an evaluation form is provided for attendees to evaluate their experience of panel. These evaluations are analysed for the agency's development and improvement of processes.



8. Recruitment, assessment and approval of Foster Carers

FSG is committed to recruiting foster carers who can provide the highest level of care to young people. Applicants from all walks of life are welcomed and we strive to recruit foster carers who will be resilient, committed and able to provide a safe caring environment as well as promote the young person's ethnicity, religion, education, language, dietary needs and more.

The Recruitment process is in accordance with Stages 1 and 2 of the Assessment and Approval of foster carers: amendments to volume 4 of the Children Act 1989 and is as follows:

- On receiving an enquiry from a potential foster carer, we request basic information to satisfy that they are capable of fulfilling the agency's requirements
- The applicants' details are passed to the Registered Manager who will consider the enquiry and, if appropriate, allocate for an initial visit. The initial visit report provides further information on the enquirer and their home and the decision whether or not to proceed to a full Form F assessment is then made by the Registered Manager
- If the decision is made to proceed and subject to satisfactory Stage 1 checks, a qualified social worker carries out a comprehensive Form F assessment. The assessment is comprised of 6-8 visits to collect information about all members of the household and the applicant(s) experience and skills in relation to fostering
- The information obtained forms the basis of an assessment report. FSG uses the **CoramBAAF** Format 2019 published by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering
- Preparation Group training (Skills to Foster) is provided which covers the responsibilities of being a foster carer and working with FSG. All prospective foster carers must attend this training
- During the assessment process statutory checks are completed on the applicants; these checks include:
 - Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks on all adult members of the family and all regular visitors to the household. These involve disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions that may be held by police or government agencies relevant to the protection of children
 - LA Checks
 - The applicant(s) is / are required to have a medical examination completed by their G.P. and the report is made available to FSG's Medical Adviser for recommendation about the applicants' health and any potential impact on fostering

- During the assessment process references are obtained from a minimum of 3 people who know the applicant as well as references from the school of any birth children, employer and previous partners
- On completion of the assessment the content of the Form F assessment report is shared with the applicants and then presented to the Fostering Panel. Applicants are provided with a panel guide informing them of panel members' roles, skills and experiences and informing them of their functions and responsibilities
- To assist in the decision-making process the assessing social worker and applicants are invited to attend the panel meeting
- The panel makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants to be approved as a foster carer with FSG
- The Decision Maker receives the recommendation of the Fostering Panel, and on behalf of the agency makes the final decision about approval
- Applicants are informed verbally and in writing about the organisation's decision
- If an applicant is not happy with the outcome of the panel, they can appeal within 28 days. The agency informs the applicants of the process



9. Support to the Foster Carers

FSG values the work foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people they care for. Support for the families who foster is vital to successful outcomes and we provide flexible, responsive and productive support to our foster carers. Identifying and arranging the necessary level of support is agreed at the point the young person and foster family are matched. This support is managed and monitored in such a way that adjustments are made, as required.

Every foster carer has an allocated Supervising Social Worker to support them in the fostering task. The Supervising Social Workers understand that they have a responsibility for ensuring that the child's needs in placement are met and that any significant developments pertaining to the child has to be relayed to the placing Authority.

FSG offers the following support to all our foster carers:

- 24 hours telephone support
- Supervision and support from a qualified FSG Supervising Social Worker
- A comprehensive learning and development programme
- A minimum of weekly contact and monthly visits by the Supervising Social Worker
- Monthly meetings with other foster carers for mutual support, guidance and friendship
- Membership of the FosterTalk
- An Annual Activities programme involving all of the foster family
- Therapeutic support for the young people and foster carers
- Two weeks paid respite per year
- Holiday Allowance
- A level of financial support that values the skills of foster carer(s)

Foster carers joining FSG are expected to be resilient and be prepared to work hard and as part of a team in sometimes difficult and challenging circumstances.

Learning and Development

FSG is committed to providing high quality learning and development opportunities that is accessible and relevant to all foster carers. We view learning and development as an important element of our support to foster carers and helps underpin good outcomes for children and young people.

An ongoing learning and development programme is provided to:

- Help foster carers know and understand their role and responsibilities, in accordance with the TSD standards
- Raise their psychological awareness in respect of the needs of looked after children and young people
- Improve knowledge, develop and refine task-centered skills
- Encourage foster carers to reflect and look at the effects of discrimination on all parts of the community
- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safer caring and in protecting children from harm including child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development in line with their learning programmes
- Keep up to date with changes in legislation and regulations

The full learning and development programme is extensive, and incorporates the following key elements:

- Child Protection
- Working with children who have been abused
- Identity and Self Esteem
- Safe Caring
- Recording
- Regulatory Requirements
- First Aid, Health & Safety & Fire
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Bullying
- Valuing Diversity and promoting equality
- Managing difficult behaviours
- Safe Handling and De-escalation
- Independence
- Education
- Contact
- Communicating with Children
- Medical
- Health
- Sexuality
- Trauma
- Attachment, Separation & Loss
- Gang affiliation
- CSE
- County lines

Carers are also encouraged to learn through e-learning, and to assist their own development via relevant literature and TV programmes.

Review of Foster Carers

FSG has a detailed procedure for the completion of reviews of foster carers. These procedures reflect the regulations and recognise good practice.

In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, there are also situations in which the completion of a foster carers review would be appropriate, i.e. following a serious complaint, allegation, concerns or significant change in circumstances.

As part of the annual review process of carers; consultation with the following key-people are undertaken to provide a sound insight of the carer's year under review:

- The views of the young person placed with the foster carer
- The views of the birth-children of the foster carer
- The views of the foster carer
- The views of the Supervising Social Worker
- The views of the YP's social worker
- The views of any other professional working with the carer or young person they care for
- An appraisal of learning and development needs is also undertaken

The Reviewing Officer's report has a definite action and recommendation for consideration by the fostering Panel for their recommendation, or direct to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision of approval.

Where the review is presented to panel their recommendations are made to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision of approval.

10. Service provision

At FSG we pride ourselves on finding the closest possible match when children need to be placed in foster care. We work in partnership with Local Authorities and other agencies to achieve the best possible outcome for children who need to be looked after.

FSG offers the following types of placements:

Short term placements

The provision of short term care that could be for a few days, weeks or months whilst the LA explore the best possible plan for the child's future.

Long term placements

These placements take place when adoption is not an option; the foster carer will care for the young person up to and into adult independence.

Emergency

FSG provide a 24-hour service to cover emergencies; many of our carers are willing to accept emergency placements. An emergency placement ideally should not exceed a few days and it is anticipated that the child or young person should be moved to a more suitable placement within a week, and in a planned way.

Tier 3 placements

These placements are for children and young people who have very complex needs or challenging behaviours. They have care histories that include previous foster placement breakdowns and previously unsuccessful residential care placements, or they may face the imminent prospect of residential care, the risk of being placed in secure accommodation or the discharge from secure accommodation. Carers have to be resilient and highly skilled to work within a professional team to best meet the young person's needs.

Respite placements

Respite placements are provided to give other carers a break if they do not have their own support network; some of our carers also offer respite placements to LA's where parents or external care-givers require a break.

Bridging placements

We can provide bridging placements for children or young people whilst permanency plans are being formulated. In such placements our carers work with the children/ young people and their families towards reunification, or prepare children / young people for adoption, or for moving to a semi-independent or an independent living arrangement.

Parent & child placements

Placements are available for the parent/s and their child, where our carers provide support and guidance to parent/s to help develop their parenting skills.

Sibling placements

Sibling placements are for brothers and sisters who are all placed together into a foster care environment. We always endeavour to keep siblings together within a family environment, unless it is deemed inappropriate by the placing Authority.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children placements

FSG has a pool of very experienced foster carers from diverse backgrounds who are willing to advocate, access services and work with the young person's care plan in supporting and caring for unaccompanied children and young people from outside the UK.

All placements are closely matched to ensure that the needs of the children and young people are met by the skills and experience of our foster carers. Many of our foster carers are very resilient and specialises in areas to meet the needs of children who present with very challenging behaviours, have complex needs or have been abused or neglected. In some cases, the foster carer might not be a match for the young person in terms of ethnicity, religion or culture but the carer has the experience and skills to work with the young person's complex needs. In such cases we require our carers to research the young person's culture, religion or ethnicity in order to support these elements of the placement as well.

Placement Regulation

All placements of children and young people with FSG foster carers are made and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and aim to meet the National Minimum Standards 2011.

This means that:

- All foster carers are properly approved, reviewed and have signed a Foster Carer Agreement
- All children's placements are made using individual foster placement agreements
- Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including introductions between foster carers, FSG, the young person, and their parents if appropriate
- Young people placed with our carers will be consulted more often, in accordance with the National Minimum Standards 2011. The consultation of young people is viewed as paramount. The wishes, feelings and views of children will be taken into account in monitoring our foster carers and developing the fostering service

Foster Families

FSG has foster families in the following geographical areas:

- Kent
- Sussex
- South London
- Essex
- Thanet
- Thames Valley

The number of placement requests always outstrips the number of foster carers with suitable vacancies; therefore, foster carer recruitment at FSG is a continuous activity.

11. Complaints Procedure

All children / young people placed with FSG foster carers are informed of how to make a complaint via a 'Children's / Young Person's Guide'.

FSG's complaints procedure is available to all foster carers, staff and children's/young people's placing authorities.

The FSG complaints procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level, i.e.

Stage 1 Informal problem solving by the SSW and direct manager

Records of investigations and outcomes of complaints resolved informally are held on file for inspection by OFSTED and other regulatory bodies.

Stage 2 Complaints are those where a resolution at Stage 1 have not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke Stage 2 of the procedure directly. Complaints of this nature are dealt with by the Manager; and if appropriate independent consultants are appointed to carry out formal investigations.

Stage 3 The FSG Representations and Complaints procedure has scope for a complainant, if dissatisfied by the response in Stage 2, to request that the matter be referred to the Services Provider.

FSG will appoint an independent person to take part in all formal stages of the agency's consideration of a complaint.

Ofsted will also be informed of the nature of the complaint and outcome. Ofsted's contact details are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 08456 404040
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

12. Contact FSG

Office:

Suite 5, First Floor Office, Carlton Chambers, 5-6 Station Road, Shortlands, BR2 0EY.

Tel: 0208 778 5656

Referrals and Placements:

07736 615940/07768 941193/01795 432998

All correspondence can be addressed to the Head of Service.

The generic email address for contacting the office is FSGinfo@fosteringssupportgroup.com

