

Statement of Purpose 2021/22

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LOTUS
FOSTER CARE



Introduction

Lotus Foster Care is an Independent Fostering Agency, registered with Ofsted as a children's social care provider. It is established to provide children and young people a positive experience of family life which support their ambitions and strive for their achievements. We recruit, train and support foster carers to achieve this mission.

Lotus Foster Care believes that children and young people have the right to experience a safe and supportive family environment that will offer safety and a nurturing home life. We believe this will allow children and young people to achieve their full potential.

The Statement of Purpose intends to provide children or young people placed within our service, their parents, our foster carers, placing authorities and Ofsted a clear understanding of the organisation's aims, objectives as well as an overview of the services it offers.

We have developed Children and Young People's Guides in more appropriate and suitable format for children of different age groups and languages to understand our Statement Of Purpose.

The Statement of Purpose, the Children's and Young people's Guides and our policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with the relevant legislations and regulations which include:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.
- The Children and Families act 2014
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2010

Our Aims and Objectives

Lotus Foster Care will work in partnership with local authorities who commission our services on an individual basis or through framework agreements. Our service is committed to working and developing partnerships and protocols with organisations which can progress the needs of the children and young people in our care.

We believe that every child or young person should feel safe, respected and cared about, therefore Lotus strives to provide a service and environment wherein everybody involved feels supported and can work together to achieve the best possible outcomes and future for children and young people.

Our core aim is to provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their health and general well-being, the service is committed to ensuring that foster carers are encouraged to help children and young people to reach their maximum academic ability.

Foster carers will have support plans and supervision to enable them to provide stable and safe environments for all children and young people who are looked after.

Children and young people will be consulted and encouraged to actively participate in their care and family life. We are committed to ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice underpinned by strong leadership.

Our core objectives are:

- To provide a child focused service offering children and young people the opportunity to live and thrive in their communities and receive individualised care.
- To recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds across London and neighboring areas to offer best possible match for children and young people.
- To offer a thorough process to ensure safer recruitment of foster carers.
- To provide training and development opportunities to foster carers to equip them with the skills they need to promote the wellbeing of children they care for.
- To provide the best possible support and service to the placing authorities in identifying foster placements best matched to the identified needs of the child or young person.
- To develop a team of professional staff to ensure highest standard of care and provide wraparound support for children and young people placed with our foster carers.
- To listen to the voice of children and young people as well as feedback from other stakeholders and regulatory bodies to keep improving on our service standards.
- To have robust strategies and measures in place for the quality assurance and development of the fostering service.
- To work in partnership with local authorities and make resources available to foster carers for the effective implementation of the care plan for the child or young person.

Management Structure

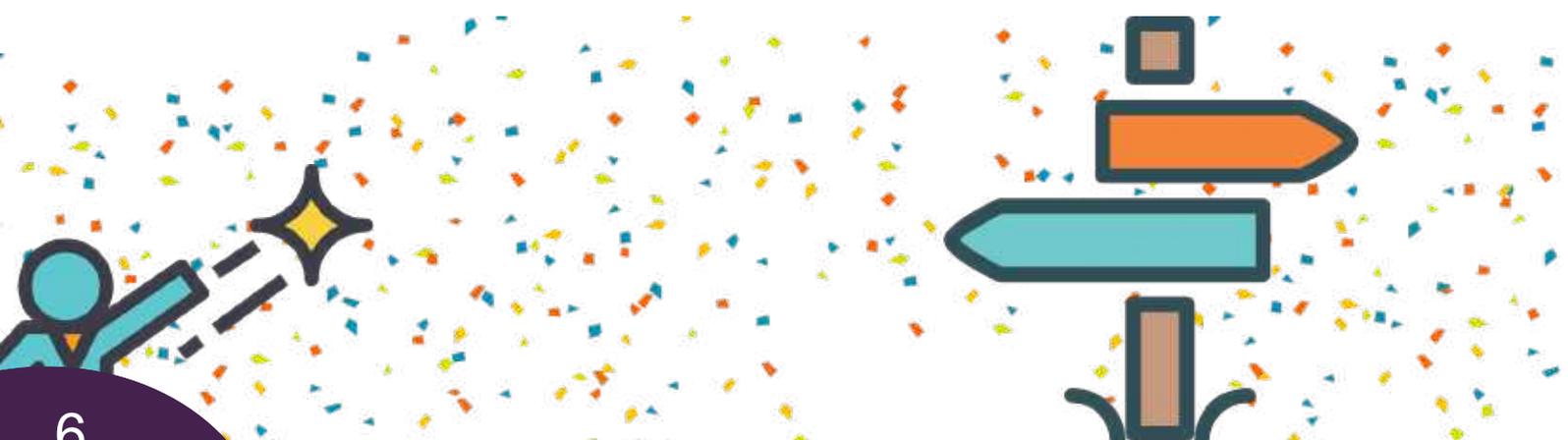
The leadership and management team of Lotus Foster Care has extensive knowledge and experience of law and practice relating to looked after children, as well as business and financial management skills to ensure the agency operates efficiently and effectively.

The leadership and management team sets strategic direction and oversee the effective delivery of services. They will ensure that all staff members follow expected practices and all fostering activities are consistent with the Fostering Regulations, NMS and in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.

The Registered Manager (Service Manager) is responsible to ensure compliance to regulations and minimum standards including overseeing assessment, supervision and support to foster carers. The Registered Manager will also monitor the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people placed with our foster carers.

The Head of Service is the Responsible Individual. The Head of Service is responsible for the effective running of services including quality assurance, training and development of staff.

The Director of Operations oversees business development which includes fostering recruitment, financial viability, human resources and facilities management.



Committed to Equality and Valuing Diversity

Lotus is committed to providing a holistic service which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all children and young people, foster families, staff members, and any other stakeholders. We are committed to provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination.



The board of directors meet regularly and are responsible for the corporate governance of the organisation, as well as determining and reviewing the following:

- Lotus' strategic vision
- Quality Assurance
- Annual Business Plan
- Policies and Procedures
- Financial Management & Performance
- Legal Compliance
- Culture, Values, Vision & Mission

Team Work

We foster a strong culture of teamwork and collaboration throughout the Lotus team. Every member of staff plays a part in the overall performance of the service. Every role matters and managers aim to be motivational and lead by example.



Service provision

Lotus Foster Care aims to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure the provision of a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with Foster Carers.

At Lotus Foster Care, we believe our role is to offer a high level of service to local authorities to enable the provision of a wide range of safe, secure and appropriate foster care options, to include:

Emergency Placements: Provided at short notice.

Short term Placements: Providing care for a few days, weeks or months, while plans are being made for the child's long-term future.

Long term Placements: Where Foster Carers provide permanent care for a child up to, and into adult independence.

Respite: This is where Foster Carers provide a break for parents/other carers, this could be a for few days or a couple of weeks.

Parent and child(ren) Placements: Foster Carers provide a safe and supportive placement to a parent(s) & child(ren), where the agency and foster carer support the parent(s) to develop their parenting skills in a natural, warm and nurturing environment.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: Support packages include; supporting religious, language and cultural needs, integration with community and faith groups.

Sibling groups: Where siblings are either placed together or separately depending on their needs, with the service promoting contact.

Solo placements: Experienced carers looking after children and young people who have complex needs and/or challenging behaviour.



The Matching Process

We believe that success in fostering and achieving the best outcomes for children and young people has a great deal to do with the matching process between child and foster family.

At Lotus, we recognise that every child and young person is a unique individual. As such, all placements are carefully 'matched' to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be best met by the suggested foster carer/s. This is done by matching with the carers level of skills and experience.

Referrals are initially received by the Placements Team, who liaise closely with the social work team, local authority and Foster Carers, to ensure that the child's needs will be fully met through the best possible match.

We take the decision to place a child very seriously and all decisions to place are overseen by Lotus' Registered Manager, to ensure we have made the best possible match for the child and Foster Carer.

Foster carer pen profiles are completed and are shared with local authorities when matching children and young people, where possible, these should be presented to the child or young person coming into care.

Where possible, we promote introduction meetings to take place and ensure pre-placement discussions are held between carer, local authority social worker and the supervising social worker (SSW).

The fostering service promotes the safety and welfare of each child placed in its care through effective safer caring and risk management plan.

Providing a safe, secure and stable placement for children and young people is paramount. To support our placements, we ensure the children and young people in our care are fully supported and that their wishes and views are regularly obtained.

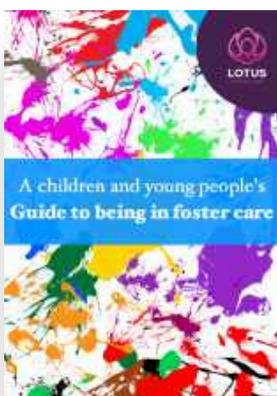
Children and young people are provided with personalised care in their foster families in line with their wishes and feelings. Foster carers provide an environment that encourage and support children and young people to develop positive behaviour and relationships.

We seek and encourage all children and young people placed with our carers to express their wishes, feelings and their views. Which are taken into account in improving our services.

The service works in partnership with relevant organisations to promote the safety of children and young people with a key focus on enhancing their wellbeing. This includes prompt access to relevant health professionals and opportunities to participate in a range of positive activities.

The educational achievement of children and young people are actively promoted through ensuring their access to appropriate educational provisions and supporting them in achieving the targets as per their Personal Education Plan.

Children and young people are presented with guides relevant to their age and understanding. These will be available in different formats and languages. Children and Young People are provided with welcome packs, these include comfort items as well information around their rights, social media safety and who to speak to about any concerns.





Local Authorities

Lotus Foster Care is committed to work closely with local authorities to meet the needs around suitable foster care placements for children and young people.

Lotus Foster Care is a member of a number of commissioning frameworks, which further support our partnership working and understanding of the sufficiency needs of local authorities. The team meet with local authorities on a regular basis to ensure this is reflected in the service's development plans.

The agency works in partnership with placing authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people placed with the agency. Local authorities have access to a 24-hour duty line to contact the agency on matters that need urgent attention and support with emergency placement requests.

The agency actively monitor and support the stability and progress of each child or young person in our care and all significant events relating to the health and safeguarding of the children/young people are promptly notified to the appropriate authorities.

The agency recruits and maintains sufficient number of qualified and trained staff for various roles through safer recruitment practices. This ensures smooth running of the agency and professional support to foster carers and the children looked after. The staff and fostering panel members are supported and guided, to fulfil their roles to provide a high quality service to looked after children and young people.



Recruitment of Foster Carers - The Process

Lotus Foster Care promotes fostering among communities in order to recruit and support foster carers to provide safe, stable and supportive environment to a child or young person in care.

We recruit foster carers from all backgrounds to meet the ethnic, linguistic and cultural needs of children and young people who require foster placements. We endeavor to offer an effective process of recruitment to prospective foster carers. Prospective applicants are also provided with Prepare to Foster sessions (introduction to fostering)

Those who are interested in becoming foster carers with the agency are treated fairly, without prejudice and with respect. Prospective foster carers are provided with timely and relevant information following their initial enquiry. Applicants will be kept informed about the progress of their application throughout the process.

Lotus Foster Care seek to recruit applicants who have suitable or transferable core skills, which can be nurtured and supported into the role of approved Foster Carers.

The foster carer assessments are conducted as per Regulation 26 and Schedule 3 of Fostering Service Regulations by qualified and skilled social workers.

The completed assessment on the applicant's suitability to be approved as a foster carer and any recommended terms of approval are presented to the fostering panel to make recommendations.



The agency constitutes its fostering panel from a central list of professionals with relevant qualifications and experience. The agency's fostering panel ensures a robust process in making its recommendations.

The assessment and the panel recommendations are reviewed by the agency decision maker to make an objective decision.

The process from initial application to an agency decision whether to approve will be concluded within 8 months where there is no unavoidable delay.

Foster carers approvals will be reviewed every 12 months or before if the agency deems it essential to review the continued suitability of foster carers. The agency will seek feedback from the carers, their family members, the looked after child and the placing authorities.

All first reviews of foster carer approvals, reviews conducted following enquiries into complaint or allegations against carers and any significant changes to the foster carers circumstances will be presented to the agency's fostering panel to make suitable recommendations, thereafter reviewed by the agency decision maker.

Following successful approval, the foster carer signs Lotus' foster care agreement which outlines the commitments of the foster carer and the agency to work together to:

- Adhere to Lotus Foster Care's philosophy and working practices.
- Complete learning and development programmes which includes regular attendance at training events and support meetings.
- Comply with all safeguarding and Health and Safety Requirements.
- To proactively support the care planning of Looked After Children.

Support to Foster Carers

We believe that our package of support is crucial to the success of the foster placements. We expect our foster carers to provide a sensitive, professional, and high standard of service to children and young people who are placed with them.

Foster carers will have close support from a supervising social worker to give guidance, advice and have regular supervision with a focus on development.

Supervising Social Worker

Each foster family is allocated a supervising social worker to visit regularly to provide support and supervision. They monitor standards of care, encourage high standards. They are also available for telephone consultation and liaise with the local authority social worker for the child/young person.

Ongoing Training

All foster carers will be given trainings according to an annual training plan which will be focused on providing important skills and knowledge to ensure best possible care is provided to each child/young person placed in their care. Foster carers are supported to complete Training, Support and Development standards within 12 months of their approval.

Foster Carer Support Groups

All foster carers have access to peer support through support groups and events that are arranged by the agency throughout the year.

Emergency Support

All foster carers have access to a 24-hour support line that is manned by our experienced and qualified social workers. Senior managers are always available and can be contacted by social worker for any support and guidance.

There is access to Out of Hours support to Lotus staff members, foster carers and children/young people 24 hours a day throughout the year.

Fostering allowance

All approved Lotus carers receive an allowance, paid every month throughout the placement. The level of this allowance is dependent on the type of placement and experience of the foster carer. All foster carers are self-employed and, as such, must pay their own Tax and National Insurance, which is a nominal amount. Detailed financial guidance, alongside details of a specialist accountant to assist with tax issues, is provided with in the 'guide to allowances for foster carers'

Any additional services required in order to meet a child's or young person's particular needs and circumstances, over and above those outlined in a contract, are negotiated and agreed with the responsible local authority at the point of placement or at subsequent reviews.

Policies & Procedures

Foster carers have access to a comprehensive Fostering Handbook. The Handbook contains information, policies and procedures on all aspects of fostering, and is updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document.

Independent support

Foster Talk Membership: All Lotus Foster Carers are entitled to annual membership of Foster Talk. This is paid for by Lotus Foster Care and gives the Foster Carers access to advice and guidance including financial and legal advice and insurance.

Data Protection

We use a secure encrypted system to send information externally about young people and Foster Carers. We take Data Protection seriously and have ensured all staff have been given training on this subject area including the principles of the GDPR, to ensure personal / sensitive information is processed lawfully, safely and securely.

The service also uses 'Charms', an industry leading software, providing foster carers and staff secure logins to store, share and access files safely.

Complaints and Feedback

It is part of our ethos to foster equality, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices in everything we do. The agency will take a robust stand against discrimination in any shape or form. At all times, Lotus Foster Care expects its staff and carers to positively embrace diversity and treat individuals; adults and children alike, with respect.

Children, their birth families, foster carers and any other service users will be encouraged to make comments and provide feedback about the service.

Lotus Foster Care has a comprehensive complaints procedure, which will be made available in different formats suitable for children, young people, carers, parents and professionals.

Contact details:

Lotus Foster Care
Interchange
81-85 Station Road
Croydon,
CR0 2RD
Tel: 020 8106 6800

We welcome and value any suggestions and feedback from all stakeholders to improve our services.

Email us on: info@lotusfostercare.co.uk

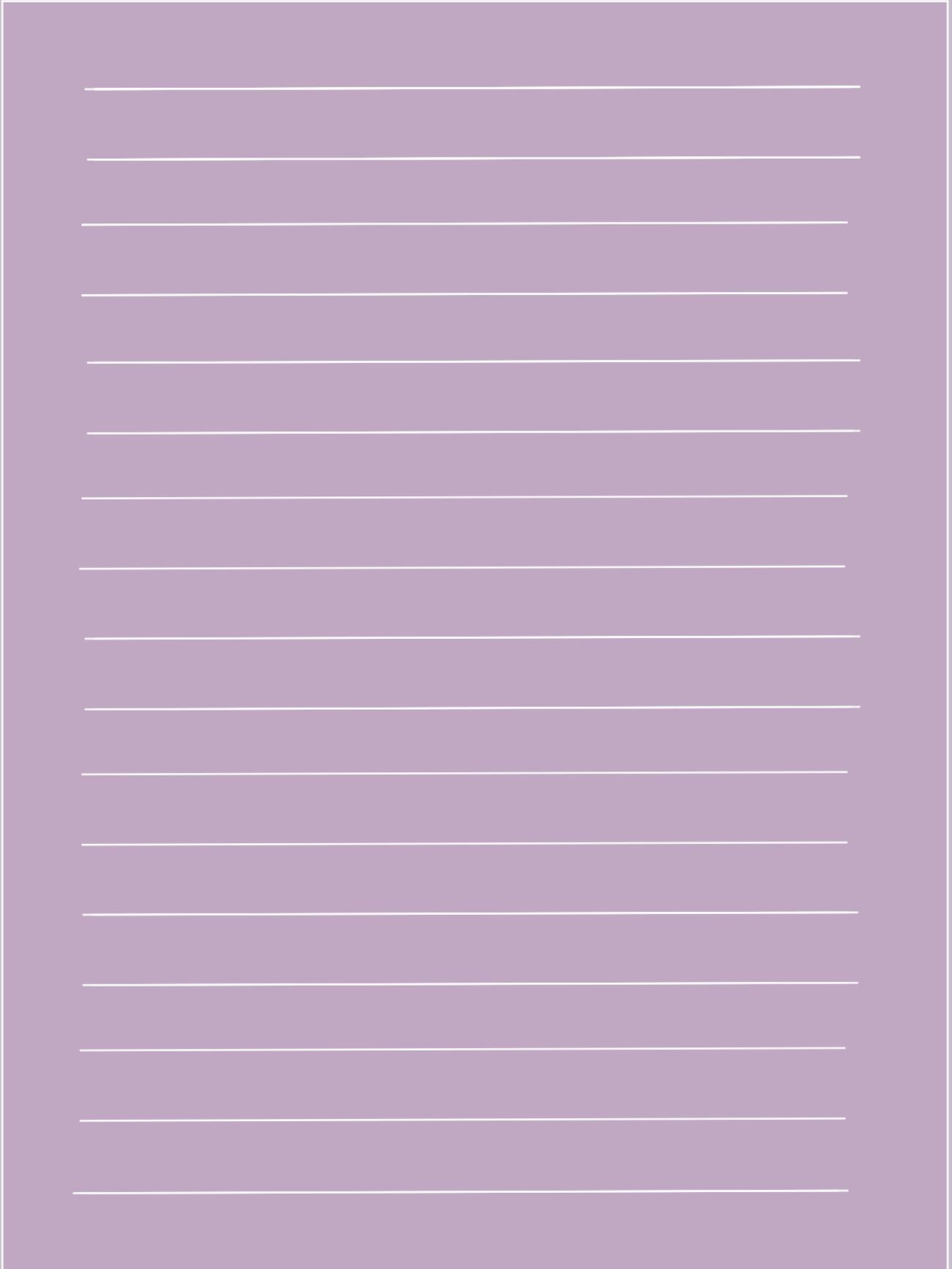
Lotus Foster Care is registered with and is inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) under the Care Standards Act 2000 / Fostering Service Regulations 2011.

Please find details below for Ofsted.

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LOTUS

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Connect with us

