



FAMILY FOSTERING PARTNERS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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Introduction

About this Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with Part 2 of The Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019 and the Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services 2019. The document also notes the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, The Regulation, and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, The Regulated Services (Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2017 and The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018.

This Statement of Purpose gives

- An outline about the services that Family Fostering Partners provides,
- A description of how it manages and supports these services,
- An explanation about where and how the services will be provided
- Evidence of its fitness to provide fostering services
- A description of how the welfare of the children within its care will be met.
- An outline of the systems in place to recruit, train and supervise foster parents and staff.

In addition to the Statement of Purpose, Family Fostering Partners also provides age and developmentally appropriate written guides to all children in placement. Our guides are available in either English or Welsh. They are reviewed annually and are routinely updated when any significant changes occur. We are also currently developing a Makaton guide.

The Statement of Purpose is available as a source of information to all foster parents, prospective foster parents, children and young people in placement, parents, and colleagues from Local Authorities and other agencies. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually by the senior management team, and a copy is also available on the website www.familyfosteringpartners.co.uk

Alongside the Statement of Purpose, Family Fostering Partners has policies and procedures, developed to provide clear guidance for staff, foster parents, fostering applicants and Panel members. Our policies and procedures, like this Statement of Purpose, are also regularly reviewed and updated. Approved foster parents with Family Fostering Partners can access copies of the most current versions of our policies and procedures via CHARMS, the agency's secure database, and copies are made available to our staff and Panel members through our internal systems.

Family Fostering Partners is regularly inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to ensure the aims and objectives described in this Statement of Purpose are achieved.

Family Fostering Partners is committed to innovating and improving services to ensure that children's care and well-being is central to our service delivery.

Our Values and Ethos

Family Fostering Partners is driven by a commitment to provide;

- **Children in care** with an experience of a well matched, stable, and nurturing family homes in which they can grow and thrive
- **Foster parents** with first class support, supervision, and training to enable them to provide and maintain that stable, transforming environment
- **Local Authority partners** with high quality, value-for- money children's services with tangible and positive wellbeing outcomes for children

At Foster Family Partners we have a set of core values, which describe the way in which we want to approach everything we do. These values are our promise to anyone who is part of Foster Family Partners. We promote a culture that encourages candour, openness, and honesty at all levels.

Our core values are;

To grow responsibly

We will manage our growth carefully and ensure that we never lose our family feel, where every young person and foster family are known, valued, and supported.

To have fun

We want to enjoy our work and to let our passion for making a positive difference to children and young people shine through.

To inspire

We strive to always be the best we can, and to engage with colleagues, customers, children, and young people in a way that makes Family Fostering Partners memorable.

To involve

We commit to consulting with and involving foster parents, birth children and looked after children in shaping the way that our service is run.

To evolve

We will adapt to change by being creative and innovative: listening to our staff, foster parents, young people, and customers and developing new ways of delivering care without compromising on our high standards.

Section 1- About the Provider

Name of the Service	Family Fostering Partners Ltd
Legal Entity	Family Fostering Partners is a Limited Company Company Registration Number - 09443529
Registered Company Address	Office 1, Block B, Llys Y Barcud, Cross Hands Carmarthenshire SA14 6RX
Responsible Individual	The Responsible Individual is Judith Rees-Howells who is also an Owner/ Managing Director.
Manager of Service	Bernadette Millis, the Service Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the service.
Service Address	Office 1, Block B, Llys Y Barcud, Cross Hands Carmarthenshire SA14 6RX

Section 2 - Description of the location of the Service

Family Fostering Partners is an Independent Fostering Agency that recruits, assesses, trains, supervises and supports Foster Parents across the South Wales area (defined by the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru in the All Wales Fostering Framework as Lot 1).

We operate from our office based at Cross Hands and have Link Workers allocated to geographical areas and/or carer specialisms to ensure all our parents, and the children in their care, have ready access to supervision and support.

Our Fostering Panel is held at our Cross Hands office; however, we offer a live video link facility with Panel for any new applicants or approved parents who are unable to attend Panel for example due to distance (being more than an hour's drive away), disability or injury.

Foster Parent training and support groups are delivered either in the Cross Hands office, or in hired venues within the communities in which our parents live. This ensures a local focus to our service and supports a bespoke family feel where parents in designated geographical areas can get to know one another really well and form positive peer relationships built from attending training, support groups and foster family activity days together.

Section 3 - About the Services we Provide

Family Fostering Partners work in partnership with our Local Authority customers to provide a wide range of foster homes for children and young people from birth until their 18th birthday. All foster homes are matched to ensure a good fit between the needs of the young person and the skills and experience of the foster parent. Our focus is always on delivering good outcomes and keeping children in family-based care.

Our service provision includes:

Short Term Placements - where children and young people are matched with a foster parent who supports them for either a specific fixed term of days, weeks, or months, or on an open-ended basis until the long-term plan for the child/young person's future has been determined.

Long Term Placements - Foster care becomes a route to permanence for children who cannot return to their birth families, but where adoption is not an option. Our foster parents offer children and young people a secure base until they are old enough to live independently.

Enhanced Need Placements - Family Fostering Partners has foster parents who are skilled and experienced in working with children and young people who are defined by the commissioning Local Authority as having complex needs. Added support may be made available to such placements.

Solo placements - with foster parents who are skilled and experienced at working with children and young people whose needs are so complex that they prevent the placement of any other children who are looked after within the family. Added support is made available to such placements.

Sibling Groups Placements - for brothers and sisters who are all need to be placed together with foster parents.

Emergency Placements - provided by Family Fostering Partners parents at short notice when unforeseen emergencies do not allow for any prior planning. Family Fostering Partners runs a 24-hour service, which allows emergency placements to be identified, safely matched, and where appropriate, made out of usual working hours.

Respite Placements - We recruit families who are able to provide a regular break for parents and/or other parents. Respite placements can be one off events, or may be time limited, but may also be an integral and regular feature of a child/young person's care plan.

Parent and Child placements (PAC)- These are time limited placements usually 12 to 16 weeks in duration but can be longer, where parents provide a highly specialised service to a parent(s) and their baby and/or young child(ren) to support the development of their parenting capacity within a family home and for the placing local authority to work with the parent(s) to make an assessment of their ability to meet the long term needs of their child/children. All foster parents offering this type of placement, must show that they have

the experience, knowledge, skills, and aptitude to do so and are required to undergo specialist training for the role.

Transitional Placements - Specifically designed for young people who are ready and able to move out of the residential sector into a family environment. These placements may also be suitable for young people who have experienced multiple placement breakdowns or are placing themselves at risk. All foster parents offering this type of placement, must show that they have the experience, knowledge, skills, and aptitude to do so. More support is made available to foster parents providing such placements.

Section 4 – How the Service is provided

How we manage planned, urgent and respite admissions

Every child and young person who receive a service from Family Fostering Partners are valued as unique individuals, and we take great care before offering any placement resource.

We recruit a diverse range of foster families to ensure that we are able to be flexible and child centred in the care that we provide, and matching is integral to the way in which we deliver our services, maintain high standards of care, and promote best outcomes.

Every placement made by the agency, even those made in an emergency, are carefully matched to align the needs of children and young people with the skills, experience, and interests of our foster families. We firmly believe that a rigorous approach to matching children referred for placements with potential foster families, is fundamental to achieving placement success.

The majority of foster placements in Wales are commissioned through the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR); a secure on-line commissioning and matching tool used by all 22 unitary Welsh authorities. We access as much comprehensive information as possible during the referral stage to enable us to fully understand the child or young person's individual circumstances, their personality, likes and interests, to know their needs and what is important to them and the desired placement outcomes.

Relationships for Children Looked After are key to increasing their emotional resilience and wellbeing and therefore we put relationships at the heart of our service. Matching the needs of children referred to the agency, with the skills and interests of our parents is a vital part of the way in which we ensure a high- quality service to children across Wales.

Family Fostering Partners will not make placements based merely on foster parent vacancies, but rather will seek to place children with foster families whom we consider are well matched to them and therefore who are able to provide positive wellbeing outcomes supporting children to grow up happily and successfully and be well looked after.

All referrals are processed by our very experienced Link Workers in full and active consultation with the Service Manager and/or Managing Director, both of whom are also qualified Social Workers. Any and all information known about the child from the referral is always shared with the potential parents, verbally over the phone and/or in person and also through our secure database CHARMS.

Once foster parents have agreed to be put forward for a particular child/children we complete a very detailed matching document evidencing how any potential foster placement will meet and promote a child/young persons' needs around

- Health
- Family and Social Relationships
- Emotional and Behavioural Development
- Social Presentation
- Self-Care Skills
- Education
- Identity

In addition to completing this very detailed matching document on the CCSR data base, we also provide the local authority seeking the placement with a written profile of the foster parents with photographs, setting out details of the family, their home and their experience and training, and when appropriate we will provide a Child friendly Foster Parent profile for use by the child's social worker with the child/young person to introduce them to the foster family.

We take the decision to offer a foster placement to a child very seriously and as such, all decisions are overseen by the Service Manager and/or the Responsible Individual. This is still the case when placements are made in an emergency, or out of hours. Either the Service Manager or Responsible Individual is available 24/7 for consultation and are always involved in a decision to place.

This approach ensures we match the uniqueness of the child to a parents qualities and strengths and that children, young people and their parents who are supported and cared for by our service are placed with foster families who have the right attributes, skills, and knowledge to meet their needs. This may include matching with foster parents who are trained in specialised areas such as managing challenging behaviour, caring for those who have been sexually abused, caring for adolescents, or caring for children with disabilities. If gaps are found in the foster parents' experience, added support, services or training will be offered.

Whenever possible, Family Fostering Partners Link Workers are present at the foster home when placements are made and use the opportunity to ensure that basic paperwork is received from the Local Authority Social Worker at the earliest opportunity. When paperwork is not immediately available, Family Fostering Partners has tracking and escalation processes in place to ensure that this is received in the most efficient and timely manner.

Arrangements for assessing, planning, and reviewing children's care

When a child or young person is placed with Family Fostering Partners, their Care and Support Plan, prepared by the Local Authority, shapes, and influences the way in which the agency plans and delivers its services. Family Fostering Partners completes a personal care plan for every child who is placed with the agency. Where possible this plan is completed before the placement begins, but in case of an urgent need for care, the plan is completed within 24 hours of placement and reviewed when required, but at least every three months. The child or young person is involved in this process in the most appropriate and child centred way.

Children are at the centre of the care they receive within Family Fostering Partners. To help children achieve wellbeing and the things that matter to them, whether that's to access a service through the medium of Welsh or English, to take part in out of school activities, to get a job, or to see the people who matter to them most, we work in an open and transparent way with children and their parents to ensure their care and support is the best it can be. This includes completing a provider assessment within 7 days of the commencement of placement

For every child placed with the agency we complete an Individualised Safe Care Plan and if appropriate an added Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan as soon as possible after the child is placed with us, to ensure their needs are understood and safeguarded. These plans are live documents and are regularly updated as the child or young person grows and their needs change. Children are encouraged to take an active part in this process to ensure their care plan is person centred and personalised to them and that their views are heard.

All children and young people in our foster families are registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician to find and address any unknown or unmet health needs. Our foster parents ensure that all the children they care for have their health needs met, taking them to routine and any specialist health appointments.

We provide every child with a 'Health Passport' detailing all health information, health appointments and health outcomes for the child. This goes with them if for example, they have a 'sleep over' (respite) with another Family Fostering Partners foster parent or designated person assessed by the agency to provide this support. The Health Passport also accompanies the child or young person when they leave our care and are available to the child's Local Authority social Workers during their routine statutory visits.

When it is appropriate to do so, all efforts are made to support a child/young person to remain in the school where they are on roll, but when distance means that children who are looked after have to change schools, our foster families work in partnership with the child, their Link

Worker and the Local Authority Social Worker to identify and ensure a successful transition to a suitable alternative mainstream school/ college or other education provision. This may include the foster parent and headteacher meeting to discuss the child's needs; the foster parent going with the child for introduction visits, or negotiating a part-time timetable until a child is settled and feels confident to attend fulltime. In this way we help children feel supported and to achieve success.

We support our foster parents to communicate with their children's class teachers - daily if required, to attend all relevant meetings, attend parents' evenings, sports days, concerts, and other events. Our foster parents take an interest in, and have a routine for homework to be completed, offering to help children if they get stuck. They also engage in informal learning outside of school and actively support extracurricular activities, enabling children to develop key life skills.

The progress that children make in our foster homes is reviewed during the supervision visits made to foster families by the agency's Link Workers. Our Link Workers must see and speak to children alone on at least every 3rd visit; to actively encourage children to participate in plans and meetings about them; to discuss their wellbeing outcomes and to understand on an individual level with our children what 'emotional wellbeing' means to them. This close engagement with people results in services which meet their needs. A written record of these visits is made and shared with the foster parent using CHARMS a secure electronic data base, and records of visits focussing on the child or young person's progress are also made available to the Local Authority Social Worker.

Our CIW report verifies that young people in our care ***"have a voice and are encouraged to express their views in relation to their day to day lives and within the care planning process."*** (17th May 2018). The report confirms that the children we look after are ***"...regularly encouraged by their SSW's during visits to express their views, particularly regarding any worried they may have."*** (17th May 2018) and that children and young people are encouraged ***"to, be creative, to follow their interests, exploring new challenges and experiencing a sense of achievement."*** (17th May 2018)

Children's progress is reviewed externally within the Children Looked After system. A Link Worker will always attend these meetings with parents, and we will always as appropriately support young people to attend and take an active role in these Local Authority led meetings. We provide training and supervision to enable foster parents and staff to be confident advocates for children in our care; to support the child's voice, to endorse their right to exercise control over their lives, and to be assisted to access formal advocacy services when required.

We also review placement outcomes and children's wellbeing internally through the foster parent annual review process. In addition to seeking the foster parents' and other professionals' views, we actively and creatively seek children's views on their placement as part of this process. Depending on the needs of the child and young person this may be through discussion, through play or questionnaires, which can be completed on paper or electronically.

Here are a selection of comments taken from young people, foster parent, parent and professionals as part of the foster parent annual review process.

One young person writes ***"they treat me like their own child. They have trust in me."*** Asked how she gets on with the people in her home, this young person comments ***"very well, it's like I'm meant to be here"*** This young person feels part of the family and involved in decisions, commenting ***"I'm involved in everything, trips out, punishments, holidays"***, they describe themselves as being ***"happy 😊"***. They recognise that they are doing better in school and cite involvement in activities and interests as positive contributors to identity and emotional wellbeing.

Another young person writes ***"I like M and S (Foster Parents), walking the dogs, making cakes, riding my bike."***

Another young person describes how they like ***"everything"*** about their foster home.

Yet another writes how they like ***"the animals," "T & K,"*** (the parents) and ***"the farm."*** This young person describes their foster home as ***"amazing."***

Local Authority Social Worker comments about our foster homes include the following.

- ***'The foster parents show empathy and provide K with a platform to express himself in his own time, as well as to offer K options in most cases. Foster parents include K in decision making and again this enables him to feel safe, listened to and most importantly, part of their family. The care that K is receiving from his foster parent is excellent. All his physical emotional, and educational needs are being met. His foster parent has a good insight into the needs of children who are delayed and is able to manage all K's behaviours in a positive way.'***
- ***"The foster parent has given C the opportunity to develop and understand things in an age appropriate way, relevant to his needs and understanding. C has made considerable progress since being in placement ...he now presents as a young child with an understanding of appropriate behaviour and is progressing in his social capabilities."***

- ***“X now has very few behavioural outbursts; this is indicative of how safe and happy he is in placement. Foster parents also encourage X to engage in after school activities based on his likes and interests”.***

Feedback on the way in which Family Fostering Partners promotes education for the children in our care includes the following comments. A Headteacher writes, ***“the foster parents have established a strong relationship with the school ... are very supportive especially when X has experienced difficulties in school; their dealings with him are calm and reassuring.”***

A foster parent described how ***“X started at school part time in the mornings only in September and by November he was fulltime. He has settled so well and working extremely hard to catch up on work he has missed out on... Regularly comes home with certificates. We are extremely proud at how hard he has worked. Our goals over the next year are to help X believe in himself more”*** Asked what he likes most about school, a young person responded, ***“making new friends and now liking maths. Reading, learning new things and taking part in projects”.***

A birth parent, in a Parent and Child placement, commented how the foster parent has ***“made me feel so confident in myself and to care for G. I shall ever be grateful for her help and support,... for advising me on things and making sure I’m caring for G properly and also for being there for me.”***

A Local Authority Social Worker commented on a Parent and Child foster parent, ***“K has supported mum to develop her skills including, healthy eating, stimulation and safety issues. She has also offered mum advice on manage occasions and talked to her about the consequences of her actions. K has always prioritised (the baby) and has developed a loving relationship with him which ensured that he had the love, attention and emotional warmth that he required.”***

Our standards of care and support

We place secure and stable relationships between children and foster parents at the centre of service design and provision, fostering children’s inclusion and belonging, whilst supporting and empowering foster parents to develop strong, trusting relationships with the children they care for.

Family Fostering Partners believes that all children, including children who are looked after should expect adult support to help them develop into the best possible version of themselves. To this end we ensure that all children placed with the agency and living in our foster homes are

- Helped to be as physically safe and emotionally healthy as possible
- Involved in activities hobbies and interests
- Have access to education, learning and development opportunities
- Have control over their everyday life, and where relevant participation in work
- Can maintain their linguistic, cultural and/or religious identities
- Are supported to keep family and personal relationships
- Can develop their potential by learning and practicing life skills

The way in which we achieve this is person centred and will therefore vary depending on the specific circumstances of the child or young person, but we always operate within a framework that promotes an individual's holistic well-being. This framework includes

- A **matching process** that gives weight to a child's hobbies, interests and their linguistic, cultural, and religious identities, pair these with the interests and the cultural, linguistic, and religious background of our foster families. For example, 20% of our foster families are Welsh speaking and Family Fostering Partners can offer a full active offer of the Welsh language to any children living in those homes.
- **Preparation and introductions** to our foster families whenever circumstances allow to ensure that the child can have some control over their everyday life. To this end we produce a child friendly profile or video profile of each of our foster parents, which includes pictures of the home and the people who live there.
- A **personalised care plan** which considers the child's Local Authority Care Plan, the Individual Safe Care Plan and any Individual Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan. This plan is reviewed as required, but as a minimum, every three months to ensure that the child or young person stays as physically and emotionally safe as possible. Whenever possible and appropriate, children and young people are involved in the completion and review of these plans.
- **Building trusting and supportive relationships between staff and children** by making staff visible and familiar to children, taking time to play with them and taking an interest in them, and changing language, for example talking to children about 'sleep overs' instead of 'respite', foster parents instead of foster carers, and foster home instead of foster placement. Supporting young people to develop their sense of identity through talents, interests, aspirations and relationships, forms part of our routine activity with parents and children. Our staff organise and take part in children's activity days, and child and foster parent family days, and staff carry out life story work as the familiar and trusted adult in consultation with the placing local authority.
- All our foster parents maintain an **Individual Daily Log** on the children they look after. Maintaining records is an essential part of the foster parent's role and accurate factual recordings help monitor the child's progress. These recordings are shared with the

local authority. Foster parents use the agency's database (CHARMS) to allow data to be recorded, checked, and shared in a secure format.

- We have high placement visiting with on average **fortnightly visits and supervision** from the agency Link Worker to monitor the quality of care being provided and to ensure that children and young people are provided with opportunities to take part in hobbies and activities, are able to have contact with people who are important in their lives and have opportunities to develop life skills for the future.
- **Access to respite/day-care** from matched respite parents to the child. We also proactively assess family and friends of foster parents to provide this support to ensure the wellbeing of foster families.
- A minimum of two **Unannounced Visits** to foster parents, during which the child is seen alone, and the child's bedroom and clothing is checked. These visits focus on the child's overall well-being and ensure that care standards are maintained.
- An **Annual Review** of each parents' registration with the agency and of their ongoing suitability to fulfil the fostering role.
- Foster parents have **On Call** access to advice and support from one of our Link Workers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The on-call service is also backed up and supported by the Service Manager and/or Responsible Individual.

As all children are unique, we provide tailor made support to enhance the parent's ability to meet the unique needs of the child placed with them. This may include.

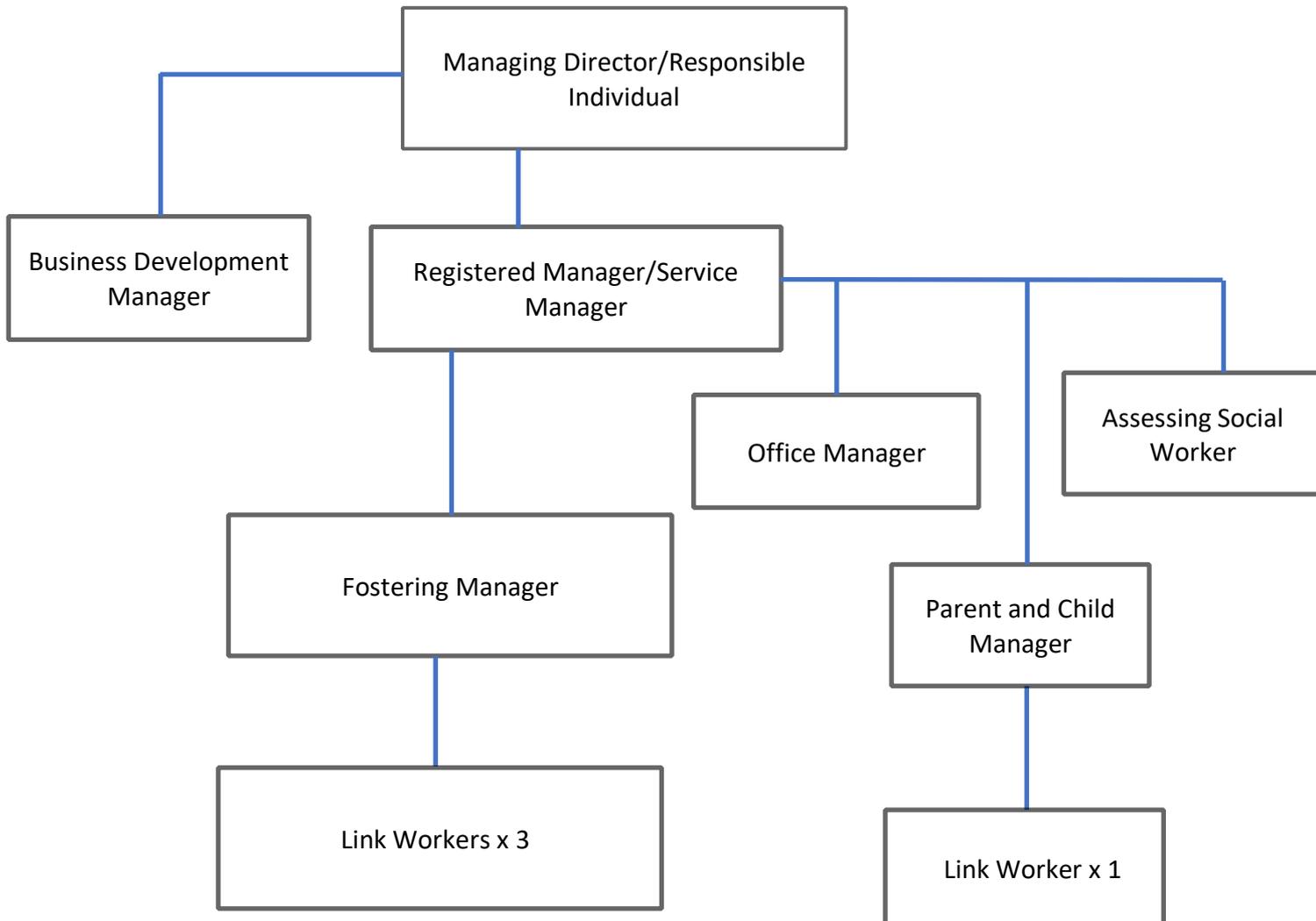
- Therapeutic support from a clinical psychologist
- 1 to 1 parenting work designed to meet the needs of the individual child
- 'Gro Brain' training for Parent and Child parents and for those caring for very young children
- Pictorial childcare guides to use with parents who are placed with their children
- Pre and in-placement planning meetings
- An enhanced level of visiting and supervision with advice, guidance, and reflection on practice
- Peer mentoring and small group training with a focus on children's specific attachment needs
- Online learning

Family Fostering Partners is a bilingual agency and has a full active offer for the Welsh language. Our Website and all other information documents, including our Children's Guides are available in both English and Welsh, and some of our staff can provide a Welsh language service to anyone who requests this. This includes our ability to conduct initial visits, foster parent supervision and Annual Reviews through the medium of Welsh if required.

Our Children's Guides are also available in two different formats, one for younger children, which is also suitable for developmentally delayed children or those children who may have communication difficulties, and one for older children.

Section 5 – Staffing Arrangements

The Management Structure of the Service



The **Managing Director** and the **Responsible Individual** for Family Fostering Partners is **Judith Rees- Howells**. Judith is a member of the Family Fostering Partners Board of Directors and is a qualified Social Worker of thirty years' experience. She holds an MSc (Distinction) in Management, a BA (Hons) in Social Policy and Administration, a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, a Diploma in Applied Social Studies, and a Post Qualifying Social Work Award. During her career Judith has worked in child protection in both the public and the third sector and has twenty years of experience in fostering within the private sector. She has in the past been a Service Manager with CIW, and a Responsible Individual with Ofsted and has worked in senior management roles in both Wales and England.

The **Service Manager** for Family Fostering Partners is **Bernadette Millis**. Bernadette is a qualified Social Worker of 25 years' experience. She holds a Level 5 NVQ Diploma in Management and Leadership (QCF), BETEC Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership, Post Qualifying Award in Social Work, Post Qualifying Award in Child Care, Diploma in Social Work, Diploma in Applied Social Studies, BA Hons Psychology and is NNEB trained. Bernadette is also a qualified course facilitator for the Fostering Changes Programme. During the first 14 years of her social work career Bernadette has worked in front line childcare services in England and Wales, including 4 years as Team Manager. For the last 11 years she has worked exclusively in the field of fostering, including the last 5 years as Service Manager for Family Fostering Partners.

Hannah Jones is the Fostering Manager and line manages three of the agency's four Link Workers. She has a QCF Level 5 Management qualification in Childcare Learning and Development, a Train the Trainer qualification, and is studying for an NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance. Hannah has extensive experience of working with children and families, working for 12 years for Faith and Families as the Setting Manager, overseeing the day to day running of a busy Flying Start service in Swansea. She has worked directly with birth parents and their children, and with foster parents (who have both short- and long-term placements) and the children placed in their care to understand and positively manage challenging behaviour. She has also worked as a Project Co-ordinator overseeing the management of 5 Family Centres and has been a telephone counsellor for Childline. Hannah has worked exclusively in fostering with Family Fostering Partners since 2018 and is a facilitator to deliver the GroBrain baby course to the agency's foster parents.

The Parent and Child Manager, **Anne Marie Evans** is a qualified social worker and holds a MA in Social Work and a BSc in Sociology. She has 13 years post qualifying experience, 4 years in front line childcare and 9 years in the field of fostering. Anne Marie's specialism is in Parent and Child fostering and she is also a facilitator to deliver the GroBrain baby course to the agency's foster parents. Anne Marie Evans line manages the Link Worker for the Parent and Child service.

Hannah Racher is an Assessing Social Worker and completes Form F assessments of new parents for the agency. She is a qualified social worker. Hannah holds a BSc in Social Work and has attained the CPEL qualification for Continued Professional Development. She has 4 years post qualifying experience, working for most of that time within a Local Authority Child Care team before joining Family Fostering Partners on 1st July 2019. Hannah has also previously worked as a child minder.

Family Fostering Partners has **4 Link Workers** who provide direct support and supervision to the agency's foster parents.

Carly James-Grey has a PQF Level 3 Qualification for Probation Workers; a Diploma in Home Based Child Care Level 3 and a Level 3 City and Guilds in Preparing to Teach in the lifelong learning sector. Carly has worked with children and families in a variety of roles and capacities, including as a partner Link Worker in the Probation Service. She has supported families that have experienced domestic abuse and has recently worked with the Police Service to help identify vulnerabilities within families. She is an accredited Trauma Recovery Practitioner and has extensive experience of delivering ACE's training. Carly joined Family Fostering Partners in March 2020

Georgia Williams has a Level 3 in Child Care Learning and Development and is a qualified Nursery Nurse. She has worked as a Child Care Worker within Flying Start and has experience of providing family support, parenting and safeguarding advice. Georgia joined Family Fostering Partners in February 2020.

Richard Cleveland qualified as Social Worker in 2014 gaining a BSc (Hons) in Social Work. Prior to joining the agency Richard has 5 years' experience working as a front-line Local Authority social worker for the City and County of Swansea in Child and Family Services, working with children in need of care and support, children on the child protection register and with children who are looked after. Richard also has experience working with adults with both mental health and learning disabilities and with the Prince's Trust "Teams" project, working with young people 16-25 who are not in education, training, or employment.

Anthony Jones gained a Human Sciences Degree in Early Childhood Studies in 2008, a Diploma for Children's Care, Learning and Development – Advanced Practice in 2015 and holds NVQ Level 3 Certificates in Leadership and Management, OCN certificates in Working with Parents and Communication. Anthony is trained to deliver Gro Brain training and Baby Massage. Anthony has worked as a Community Nursery Nurse for 4 years with the NHS delivering a public health message in schools, nurseries, family homes and community settings; for 2 years as an Early Language Development Worker for the City and County of Swansea, promoting play and language skills for children aged 0 to 3 years through 1-2-1 home sessions and within group settings, this also included WellComm screening for all eligible children aged 20 months, baby massage for parents who have a baby aged 6 weeks to 8 months, promoting bonding and relaxation and organising events. Anthony has also worked as a volunteer for SCVS providing respite and behaviour help for a primary school aged child.

The **Office Admin Manager** for Family Fostering Partners is Joanne Donald. Joanne has a Level 3 ILM in Administration and BETEC in Business Studies. She is an experienced administrator and has worked in the fostering arena for the last 16 years.

The **Business Development Manager** for the agency is Curon Howells. Curon holds an LLB and is currently undertaking an MSc in Management. He has experience of working within the private sector in media and in retail and most recently worked as Press Officer for a Member of the European Parliament.

The staffing structure within Family Fostering Partners enables the agency to maintain a high level of visiting, supervision and support to our foster parents and is reviewed regularly in line with growth in foster parent numbers.

Section 6 – Facilities and Services

How we securely store records

As an agency that works with vulnerable children and young people, Family Fostering Partners takes data protection very seriously and is committed to protecting and respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Family Fostering Partners maintains records in accordance with Regulation 39 and Schedule 2 of the Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Agency has a Data Policy which offers further guidance on this issue.

We believe that everyone has rights with regards to the way in which personal information is handled and should be able to expect that any data shared with Family Fostering Partners is treated correctly and lawfully. When processing data we comply with the principles of good practice which provides that information must be

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Processed for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Is adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary
- Is correct, kept up to date and held for no longer than is necessary
- Processed in a manner that ensures proper security

To this end, we have systems and processes in place to manage data security, including IT systems that are cloud based and protected with passwords and anti-virus software and a database which complies with ISO standards.

All approved foster parents must sign a Foster Parent Agreement which outlines the agency's expectations about confidentiality, and training is provided at the pre-approval stage to ensure this is understood.

Family Fostering Partners maintains the records held on foster parents and on children and young people in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations and Guidance. This means that

- Records are accurate, up to date and held securely
- Records of each approved Foster Parent are held for no less than 15 years after the termination of approval
- When children and young people move on from a Family Fostering Partners foster home, all records provided by the LA and relating to that child, will be offered back to the placing Local Authority. If these documents are not required by the placing Local Authority, then we will securely remove the information from our database six months following the date of the placement end.

- Records will be made available to the Welsh Ministers on request
- Children who use our service are made aware of their right to access their records, and to have such access to their records as is allowed by the placing Local Authority

How we meet with people using the service

Children have the right to a voice, and for their opinion to be heard and valued on matters that affect them. Listening to children and young people is something that Family Fostering Partners takes very seriously, with their feedback used to shape and improve the services offered.

The agency offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to participate and engage. These include.

- Consultation with Children Looked After and the foster parents own birth children routinely used to inform the foster parent's Annual Review.
- Home visits that provide a regular opportunity for Family Fostering Partners Link Workers to see children and young people on their own and ascertain their satisfaction with their placement.
- Activity events run by the agency that provide staff with an additional opportunity to speak directly with children and young people.
- Partnership working with young people, supporting them to be actively involved in their care planning process, listening to their views and what matters to them.
- Link Workers and foster parents encouraging and supporting young people to attend their Child Looked After (CLA) reviews and participate as best they can, which may include making a referral to an Advocacy Service if requested or if it is felt appropriate.
- All children are presented with an age appropriate version of the agency's Children's Guide/Young Person's Handbook that has details of who to contact if they are unhappy about any element of their care.
- Young people are also supported to complete an annual 'Survey Monkey' delivered by the 4C's (Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru) as part of an annual quality audit of independent agencies supplying placements to children on the 4C's Framework.
- Foster parents who are trained and supported to advocate on a child's behalf should a child or young person be dissatisfied with any aspect of their care plan.

How we provide training

Fostering is complex and demanding, which is why Family Fostering Partners is committed to ensuring foster parents have access to good quality learning and development opportunities, from the pre-approval stage right through to post approval. We are committed to maintaining and developing the highest standards for all our services and our training and development programmes are central to this. Family Fostering Partners has a Training Policy, and all parents and staff have a Personal Development Plan which is discussed monthly in supervision and formally reviewed annually.

Training is provided to

- Safeguard children and young people
- Safeguard foster parents
- Support parents at becoming better at their job
- Improve knowledge and skills
- Establish values and working practices which reflect the ethos and culture of Family Fostering Partners
- Encourage foster parents to take responsibility for their own professional development

Pre-approval, the training provided explores and reinforces the applicant's suitability for the foster caring role and ensures that the Family Fostering Partners standards of care are fully understood.

All new foster parents attend a specifically tailored learning and development programme during their assessment, called "Skills to Foster." This programme is delivered by experienced Family Fostering Partners staff, whenever possible, in conjunction with an experienced foster parent. The course is essential to ensure that participants fully understand the agency's expectations, particularly the expectations and demands of caring for vulnerable children and of providing a professional service to the Local Authority. All foster parents under assessment with us will also have access to the agency's bi-monthly support groups and all other identified relevant training along with the agency's existing approved parents.

Post approval, Family Fostering Partners offers foster parents a wide range of group training opportunities utilising a mix of "in house" and external training providers, supplemented with a comprehensive e-learning programme for those who wish to undertake this. Foster parents are expected to follow a core curriculum, which is clearly linked to:

- The Welsh Induction Standards
- Key findings from research, government guidance and examples of best practice.

All newly approved foster parents are given a Training and Development Portfolio in which to evidence their learning and professional development. Routine review of this forms occurs as part of foster parent monthly supervision and the foster parents' annual review.

Examples of training include:

Being Healthy	Staying Safe	Enjoying and Achieving	Making a Positive Contribution
Paediatric First Aid	Safeguarding	Fostering Changes Programme	Equality and Diversity
Gro Brain	Safe Handling and De-escalation	Fostering Attachments 5 to Thrive	Promoting Identity and Self-esteem
Introduction to Attachment	Child Sexual Exploitation	Understanding and Managing Behaviour	Promoting Contact
Child Development	Social Media and Internet Safety	Education for Children Looked After	Encouraging children to be independent and overcome executive functioning difficulties
Common Childhood Mental Health Disorders	Recording for Foster Parents	Childhood in a Digital Age	
Disability Awareness	Men Who Foster	Understanding Transitions	
Drug and Alcohol Awareness			
Safe Care			

How we meet with Staff and Foster Parents

To ensure that communication within and across the agency is of the highest possible standard and to ensure ongoing consultation and feedback from both staff and parents, Family Fostering Partners holds fortnightly all staff meetings and bi-monthly carer support groups.

The staff meetings are chaired by the Service Manager and are attended by the Responsible Individual. Practice issues are discussed including any case management issues which may present on call. The Responsible Individual also leads on sharing with the staff team, foster parent recruitment progress, and any strategic development plans.

Bi-monthly foster parent support groups are held in each of our three designated Areas. As well as offering the opportunity for informal chat and social networking with other foster

parents, these meetings may also have a formal training agenda, guest speakers, or fun activity. These groups also provide the opportunity for direct consultation and feedback from parents on service development and agency performance.

Support groups are attended by agency staff, which includes whenever possible, the Service Manager and/or Responsible Individual.

Section 7 – Governance and Quality Monitoring arrangements

The Responsible Individual

At Family Fostering Partners we believe that a positive culture within the agency, which in turn ensures the best possible outcomes for individuals, can only be achieved through strong and supportive leadership. To this end, the Responsible Individual plays a key role in setting the ethos for the agency and for promoting high practice standards for all staff and parents.

The Responsible Individual is based at the agency's office in Cross Hands making her a familiar figure who is easily accessible to staff, parents, and young people in placement. Along with the Service Manager, the Responsible Individual provides staff with management support for on call which means that she has an in-depth knowledge of all the agency's parents and of the children and young people in the agency's care.

In addition to being immersed in the day to day running of the agency, the Responsible Individual attends all staff team meetings, and visits foster parent support groups on a regular basis. This provides her with an ongoing opportunity to maintain an oversight of management, and to respond to any issues. She is a familiar figure to all who are associated with Family Fostering Partners.

The Responsible Individual also has monitoring processes in place to ensure that the quality and safety of the service is maintained. These monitoring processes include

- Having line management responsibility for the Service Manager and Business Development Manager
- Involvement in the staff recruitment process
- Oversight of the work of the Fostering Panel and the Annual Panel Report
- Monitoring of placement disruptions, compliments, and complaints
- Monitoring of staff supervision, appraisals, and frequency of file audits
- Feedback and reports of Inspections by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Collation of views or comments expressed by parents and other professionals and/or through the statutory Reviews of children in placement
- Monitoring of Foster Parent Reviews, including the comments and views collated from parents, other professionals, the children in placement and/or their representatives
- Monthly all staff, placement monitoring meetings
- The production of a bi-annual Quality of Care Report
- Quarterly reporting to the Board of Directors on the quality of care

Assessment and Approval

Family Fostering Partners is committed to the recruitment of a diverse group of Foster parents who can meet the needs of children and young people who are placed with the agency. The following process is followed when dealing with applications to foster:

Application Form – Suitable applicants are invited to complete this form which gives detailed information about them and their families. This includes each person giving written consent to carry out the necessary checks and enquiries to ascertain their suitability to foster.

Statutory Checks and References -These are undertaken for all applicants and include the following checks and references:

- Enhanced DBS checks on applicants and each adult member of the household.
- Identity Checks and verification of personal history
- Overseas check (where appropriate)
- At least 2 personal referees who will provide written references and will also be interviewed (unless the applicants are currently fostering).
- Previous partner and Family Member references (if applicable)
- School and nursery reference
- Medical Assessment.
- Enquiries to the Local Authority in the area where the applicants live (and have lived for the past 10 years).
- A health and safety assessment of the family home including a fire evacuation plan
- A financial assessment
- Current employment references
- References from all previous employment and volunteer roles involving children and vulnerable adults
- Current or previous fostering organisation references
- Pet and/or Dog Assessment

A qualified Social Worker is appointed to complete a competency-based assessment of all applicants, using the **Coram BAAF Form F**. The Form F is primarily about identifying whether an applicant or applicants are suitable to be approved as foster parents, to determine the kind of fostering for which they are suitable, and to consider any terms of approval. The form offers a structure for supplying evidence about these matters to fostering panels and to fostering service decision-maker. A subsidiary purpose is to capture the work that has been done with applicants to prepare them for the task of fostering and to identify the kinds of support that they might need.

The Form F is a detailed document which examines the applicant's motivation to be a foster parent; their capabilities and individual skills; the feelings, views and involvement of all household members, (including applicant's children who may live away from the home); any

existing demands being made on the applicant, and recommendations in terms of matching alongside the family. The assessment is a joint project and requires full participation from the applicants and their family

The assessment process includes an average of 8- 10 home visits to the applicants, and interviews with the applicants; with household members; with birth children and with referees. Throughout the assessment process applicants are helped to gather information that provides evidence of skills and experiences that are relevant to fostering.

Attendance on a **Skills to Foster** course is mandatory for all new applicants to enhance their understanding of the fostering task; to introduce them to the care standards expected by the agency and to confirm the support and training from Family Fostering Partners which will be available to assist them as they develop their skills and experience. The training forms an important part of the assessment process.

When the Form F is completed, applicants can read the report and discuss amendments. The Form F and supporting documents are presented to Family Fostering Partners Fostering Panel which is held at the Cross Hands office. The Panel will use the Form F as a basis for evaluating the applicant's suitability to foster, alongside discussion with the assessing social worker and the applicants themselves. Applicants are always expected to attend Panel unless their circumstances dictate that a video link is used.

The Panel makes recommendations to the agency whether a person is appropriate to act as a foster parent, and where it recommends approval of an application, to recommend the terms on which the approval is given, giving reasons for these recommendations. When approved foster parents return to Panel for their first annual review, and as may be required thereafter, the Foster Panel will recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to act as a foster parent, and whether or not the terms of the person's approval remain appropriate

The Fostering Panel

Family Fostering Partners has a central list of people who may be called upon to sit on the agency's fostering Panel, comprising of agency and independent members. The agency Panel Advisor is the Service Manager. Our independent members include foster parent representatives, care experienced representatives, health and education representatives, a family court magistrate, parenting support officer and independent social work representative. The chair of our Panel is an independent social worker with over 30 years post qualifying experience which includes extensive experience in fostering.

All Panel members receive regular training, guidance and support from the agency and have both probationary reviews and annual appraisals. Our Panel members share our values and ethos, and this is reflected in members comments about the agency.

When asked what you like about working for this company Panel members said

- *"The ethos from the staff of putting the welfare of the child first in their minds is obvious in their reports, this reflects their professionalism, their understanding of the complexity of children in the care sector, and seeing children placed with families who genuinely want to do so for the right reasons, being part of a system and organization that wants to help and support the vulnerable child or children and place them in as far it is possible in a safe and caring family environment, hopefully to improve the*
- *child's well-being and have a positive impact on him or her regardless of background, age, or other diverse factors.*
- *"The total professionalism and dedication of the FFP team is to be commended. I have learnt a great deal working with you and I believe it has made me a more effective foster carer."*

Post Panel, usually on the same day, the Agency Decision Maker discusses the Panel recommendations with the Panel chair, taking full account of the Panel's recommendations to reach a decision on approval. Should the agency not recommend approval, the applicant will be written to outlining reasons for this decision and provided with information regarding their right to appeal including how to access the Independent Review Mechanism.

All successful applicants are provided with a Foster Parent Agreement, confirming their appointment as an agency foster parent. The agreement gives details about their terms of approval, and outlines expectations of both foster parent and agency.

Foster Parents Handbook

Once approved, Family Fostering Partners foster parents are provided with access to online resources, which includes the Foster Parent Handbook to aid them with their fostering task. The Handbook provides a comprehensive guide of policies and procedures in relation to the fostering task and is reviewed and updated regularly.

Foster Parents' right to appeal or access the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

For all reviews, a full report will be prepared by the agency Link Worker, contributions from the child or young person currently in placement will be sought, alongside the child's local authority Social Worker, from the child's school/nursery or other education provision and

from any other professional involved with the child, and if appropriate from birth parents or other significant family members. The views of anyone placed within the fostering household within the preceding year will also be sought, as will the views of any birth children in the household.

The annual review provides an opportunity for the agency and foster parent to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. It takes account of:

- Recommendations of the previous review
- Enquiries made, and information obtained by the agency
- Outcomes for children placed in this household since the last review
- Any significant changes in the household including to accommodation
- Training undertaken by the carer and support given
- The views of the Carer and all members of the household including children who are/have been placed during this period
- The views of placing authorities
- The views of birth children
- The views of family members of the child or children placed
- Updates on all statutory checks
- Annual updates on Health and Safety checks
- Any concerns, complaints, or compliments

Post approval Support and Supervision

Every foster parent approved by the agency has an allocated Link Worker who is experienced and skilled in delivering high standards of care and assistance. Caseloads are kept manageable to ensure that worker has sufficient capacity to provide an appropriate level of visiting and support to the carer, and lines of work are monitored by the Service Manager during staff supervision and team meetings.

Foster parents, staff and Panel members are all provided with appropriate training to fulfil their roles and this is monitored via carer supervision and carer annual reviews, staff supervision and appraisals, and Panel member appraisal.

Asked how they feel about the support foster parents receive from their Link worker and the agency foster parents have said;

- *"X is great in providing for all my needs in my role as a foster carer, always positive, and helpful, I feel I can offload to her when at times my emotions are high"*
- *"X is excellent. She has really supported and assisted me with issues with my young man."*

- *"They (FFP) are always there for me and gave a lot of encouragement at the beginning when we were struggling. This foster parent describes using the training she has received "to understand their (child's) needs and feelings, and to hopefully help them feel better about themselves."*
- *"I feel myself and Y have a good relationship based on being honest and open, and importantly being able to have a sense of humour, particularly during the challenging times. I always feel confident during meetings etc that she will step in if needed, if I were to feel under pressure in any way or even just tongue tied."*
- *"Very happy. Y has always been there with support, advice, and guidance whenever it is needed. All other staff are always very supportive and helpful. We have always had full support at professional meetings and home visits. Nothing is too much trouble"*

Our Staff also feel well valued and supported

- *Over the last year I feel I have grown and gained in confidence in my role as Link worker and have become more confident in my ability and my professional judgements. I believe FFP has a significant amount of opportunities and potential for the future which will further benefit my professional development as well as enjoyment within the role*
- *There isn't anything that I dislike about working for the company*
- *I have thoroughly enjoyed working for FFP. I have felt that my skills, knowledge, and experience have been taken into account and my role and responsibilities have adapted to complement these. I feel that I have been adequately supported to grow and develop my specific fostering knowledge and have been reassured that any uncertainties, worries or concerns I have had, have been supported effectively. My hard work has been recognized, appreciated and rewarded which in turn has reinforced my morale and commitment to the agency.*
- *I continue to be very much aligned to the agency's ethos and am committed to helping the agency grow and develop over the coming years.*

Health and Safety within foster homes; including having appropriate documents and insurance in place, is monitored during carer supervision and annual review, with remedial action taken to address any issues of concern.

How we deal with complaints

Family Fostering Partners recognises that customer feedback and the stakeholder views are important, and we have a number of mechanisms in place for service users to provide feedback and/or to make a complaint.

We take all complaints very seriously and learn from them so that we may continually improve the services we offer. We have a comprehensive complaints procedure which places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level and at an early stage (Stage 1), but Family Fostering Partners recognises there may be times when matters cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Stage 2 complaints are those where resolution at Stage 1 has 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 Service Manager. When this is not appropriate, another experienced person will conduct a full investigation and make recommendations for consideration and resolution.

The Family Fostering Partners Complaints procedure is made available to service users via the Children and Young People's Guides and the Carer's Handbook on CHARMS. Local Authority customers, parents or other interested parties are provided with a copy on request. The procedure is reviewed annually to monitor its satisfactory operation and any child or young person who wishes to make a complaint or raise a concern will be supported to do so.

Complainants can also go directly to CIW at any time if they believe any aspect of our service delivery does not comply with regulations or falls below the standards required. CIW can be contacted at:

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Government Buildings

Picton Terrace,

Carmarthen,

SA31 3BT

Tel: 0300 7900126

Email: ciw@gov.wales

Web: <https://careinspectorate.wales>

Alternatively, a foster parent, child or young person may also choose to approach the Children's Commissioner for Wales who can be contacted at the following address.

Children's Commissioner for Wales,

Oystermouth House,

Charter Court,

Phoenix Way,

Llansamlet,

Swansea,
SA7 9FS

Tel: 01792 765600 / **Fax:** 01792 765601

Freefone number for children and young people - 0808 801 1000

Text number for children and young people - 80 800 (starting their message with COM)

Email: post@childcomwales.org.uk **Web:** <http://www.childcomwales.org.uk>

Family Fostering Partners has a whistleblowing policy in place and a copy of this is available to all staff and foster parents and can be made available on request to any other stakeholders.

How we consult with stakeholders to affect how our service is delivered and improved

Staff have a high level of direct contact with the foster parents; children and young people who use our service; foster parents within parent and child placements; local authority social workers, and other professionals involved in our day to day business. This level of contact whether it be in person, by phone, through consultation document, or email, ensures that we are continually, as part of our day to day business, consulting with stakeholders to affect how our service is delivered and can be improved.

Regular staff supervision and appraisal, combined with robust team meetings, ensure that we are continually evaluating our service to staff, and the work provided by our staff to our stakeholders and service users.

Our Fostering Panel provides another important quality assurance mechanism for the agency.

With those local authorities with whom we have a number of placements, the Service Manager meets quarterly with the local authority Commissioning Officer to discuss the stability of those placements. During these meetings, individual placement progress is discussed, along with the placement cost, which includes any opportunity for Family Fostering Partners as an agency to decrease costs to the Local Authority or to request additional services to promote the child's wellbeing. The continued suitability of the foster placement is evaluated in line with the child/young person's wellbeing outcomes and care plan. As an agency Family Fostering Partners also use these meetings to advise the Local Authority of any service or practice developments and to discuss carer vacancies and availability.

As an independent fostering provider on the Commissioning Consortium Cymru All Wales Fostering Framework (current ranked as a Tier 1 Provider), the Responsible Individual and Service Manager attend Partnership Forums facilitated by the Consortium. These events provide independent fostering providers and Local Authorities an opportunity to consult on

how services are currently delivered and how this might be improved. The Service Manager and Responsible Individual both attend presentations, seminars, and workshops with an opportunity to discuss Family Fostering Partners' services and to identify any unmet service needs for Local Authorities.

The Responsible Individual meets Quarterly with the Board of Directors to provide an overview of the agency's quality of care and to agree the agency's strategic development and growth.