



# **UNITED FOSTERING SERVICES**

**Nurture Confidence & Security**

## **Statement of Purpose 2022-23**



## CONTENT

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. About United Fostering Services**
- 3. Our Mission Statement**
- 4. Core Values**
- 5. Achieving Positive Outcomes**
- 6. Participation and Consultation**
- 7. Management and Governance Structure**
- 8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
- 9. Placement Services**
- 10. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval**
- 11. Reviews and Termination of Approval**
- 12. Referrals and Matching**
- 13. Learning and Development of Carers**
- 14. Supervision and Support of Carers**
- 15. Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and  
Performance Management**
- 16. Fostering Panel**
- 17. Complaints Procedure**



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to United Fostering Services (UFS) Statement of Purpose. This document sets out the framework for all United Fostering businesses and activities. It outlines how we will achieve our vision for children in our care. UFS provides fostering placements for looked after children and young people which safeguard and promote their welfare and enhance their life chances.

This Statement of Purpose will detail the aims and objectives of UFS, set out its quality assurance mechanisms, and the range of services provided to children and young people, and foster carers.

United Fostering Services is set up to operate under the guidance of the following Legislation, Standards of Care, and Regulatory Frameworks:

- ✚ The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- ✚ The Care Standards Act 2000
- ✚ The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- ✚ The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- ✚ The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- ✚ The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- ✚ The Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- ✚ Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) Regulations 2009
- ✚ The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- ✚ The Care Planning, Placement, and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- ✚ The Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (Amendments) 2015
- ✚ The Children Act 1989: Guidance and Regulations, Volume 4: Fostering Services, 2011 (updated 2015)
- ✚ The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- ✚ The Human Rights Act 1998
- ✚ Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers
- ✚ The Data Protection Act 2018

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations (regulations 3 and 4 and standard 16), includes:

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

**The UFS Statement of Purpose provides a range of information that is intended for a wide audience including:**



- Local Authorities who place or are considering placing children and young people with UFS foster carers.
- Colleagues from other children's agencies.
- Foster carers and prospective applicants.
- Children and young people, who are placed with UFS carers.
- UFS staff.
- General public.
- Any parent or person with parental responsibility.
- Ofsted (registering body).

This statement of purpose will be regularly reviewed by the United Fostering's Management Team whenever there is a change, and at least annually.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide that will be provided to all children, subject to their age and understanding at the point of placement.

## **2. ABOUT UNITED FOSTERING SERVICES**

United Fostering Services is an independent fostering provider recruiting and supporting foster families to care for children and young people (0–18 years old) looked after by local authorities across the West and East Midlands. We aim to provide professional and accessible support services to foster carers and children and young people. We passionately apply strong ethical leadership and aim to use a few theoretical models in all aspects of our service such as DDP-PACE, Secure Base Model, Signs of Safety Model as well as Social Pedagogy.

The organization is managed by experienced, qualified professionals who provide an innovative and needs-led service to children, young people in foster care.

United Fostering Services is a member of the Fostering Network, and all of our foster carers can access independent support and advice from the Fostering Network.

United Fostering Services is based at 101 Lockhurst Lane, Coventry CV6 5SF

United Fostering Services Ltd. is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1989 (Company Registration No – 13193145). United Fostering will be inspected as a fostering provider under the Care Standards Act 2000/ Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

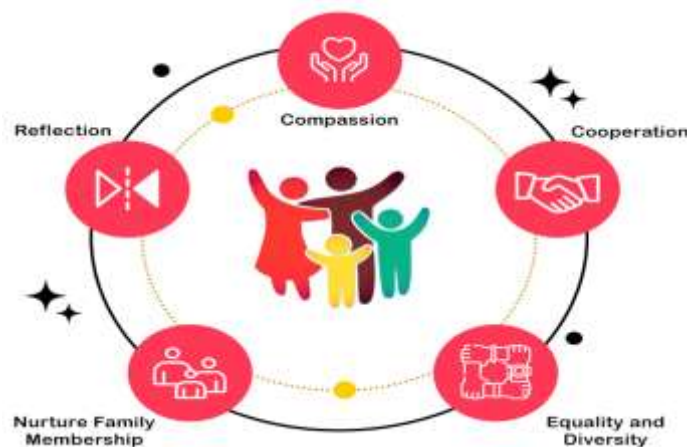


### **3. MISSION STATEMENT**

Our Mission is to provide the highest standard fostering service for vulnerable children and young people, where they can thrive and blossom physically and emotionally in a therapeutic and healthy environment that helps them to move towards greater security and build resilience. This will allow them the opportunity to relate well to others, fulfill their potential and enjoy life.

### **4. CORE VALUES**

- ✚ **Compassion-** We will recognize the trauma-related difficulties and we will always show an appropriate level of empathy and sensitivity in all our activities.
- ✚ **Cooperation-** To promote the team around the child approach and to work in genuine co-operation with all interested parties to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- ✚ **Equality and Diversity-** To promote inclusion, anti-oppressive and anti-racist approach, and will always endeavor to value, respect, and celebrate individuality, difference, and diversity in all aspects of our work.
- ✚ **Nurture Family Membership** - The ethos of our fostering service is based on the values of nurture, which are embedded throughout all areas of operation. It flourishes in our fostering households and working culture and offers everyone involved with the agency a feeling of belongingness to a family.
- ✚ **Reflection-** Routinely and efficiently apply critical reflection and analysis to our practice, this will allow us to reflect on our success and our failures, and to ensure that we can learn the necessary lessons.





## **5. ACHIEVING POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

UFS's principle is to focus on building relationships through therapeutic parenting that nurtures security of attachments in children, and therefore resilience and emotional growth. Building secure attachments and commitment to heal our children is at the heart of maintaining stability, improving educational outcomes and wellbeing.

UFS will ensure that children and young people should have plenty of support throughout their life, regardless of their circumstances or background. UFS will use seven developmental dimensions framework (defined by Parker et al, 1991) to ensure that the children and young people are progressing positively and meeting their developmental milestones in their foster home:

- **Health**
- **Education**
- **Emotions and Behaviour**
- **Identity**
- **Family and Peer Relationships**
- **Self-care Skills**
- **Social Presentation**

These dimensions provide a helpful framework to ensure that all those involved in the team around the child monitor how a child is progressing, what has been done, and what remains to be done in order to meet any developmental needs.

Below are some of the actions UFS will take about achieving each of the above outcomes for children:

- ✚ UFS will ensure that all our foster children are registered with GP, Dentist, and Optician and attend all medical appointments.
- ✚ Education is strongly associated with good outcomes (Rutter, 1991) and can also provide a complimentary 'secure base to the home (Gilligan, 1998). UFS will ensure that carers promote attendance at school and provide space and support for homework as necessary and celebrate children's successes. UFS will work with the Virtual Head, schools, and other educational settings to monitor the progress of the children we look after. Children will be encouraged to attend school activities.
- ✚ UFS will create a culture of care, acceptance, and empathy to support children with their emotional and behavioral development by developing secure attachments with their foster carers. We will ensure that our foster carers establish warm and nurturing relationships with fostered children with firm boundaries.
- ✚ We will ensure that we listen to our children- their worries, concerns, hopes. Supporting them to make a positive contribution is a way of promoting a



positive sense of self, resilience, and identity. We will support children to make a positive contribution through: consultation with children and carers and involvement of children and carers in the development of the service (further information under participation and consultation section below).

- ✚ UFS will ensure that foster carers have as much information about all aspects of a child's life as possible, so they can help a child to develop a positive identity.
- ✚ UFS will ensure that foster carers encourage and promote friendships and social opportunities for children in their care. They treat foster children as part of their family. UFS will promote family time for children and young people with birth parents and wider families, including siblings, half-siblings, and grandparents
- ✚ UFS will ensure that foster carers teach children how to look after themselves in all sorts of ways. Children will benefit from age-appropriate responsibility.

United Fostering also sets out to be compliant with Fostering Regulations and to meet and exceed the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.

#### Our aims are:

- ✚ To provide holistic services to our children and young people that will help to improve outcomes and demonstrate a real and measurable difference to children's lives
- ✚ To promote therapeutic approaches that focus on building relationships between the foster family and the child that allows healing to take place and outcomes to be delivered
- ✚ To recruit, assess, and approve foster carers who can be reflective in the work they do with children and young people to ensure that they are attuned to the needs of their child/young person.
- ✚ To support, supervise and provide ongoing training to carers so that they can provide a comprehensive service that addresses the physical, emotional, educational, and health needs of the children and young people placed with them
- ✚ To adapt a team around the child approach for the effective implementation of the care plan and placement plan, and work in partnership with all relevant professionals, agencies, and families involved in the child's life
- ✚ To work with local authorities and foster carers with paramount importance to the safeguarding of children and young people
- ✚ To follow Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures in a manner that provides effective protection and support for children and young people
- ✚ To engage with communities, individuals, and organizations to promote awareness about fostering
- ✚ To continually develop and improve our services and not to compromise on standards. Keep children at the center of all our work and ensure their participation in service development



## Our objectives are:

In pursuit of its stated aims the agency will employ policies, practices, procedures which seek at all times:

- ✦ To place the children at the center of all services provided and offer them the opportunity to live and thrive in their communities and receive individualized care.
- ✦ To recruit, develop and support foster carers and enable them to provide 'therapeutic parenting' approaches (mainly DDP informed) and 'therapeutic environments' for children
- ✦ To ensure that full and satisfactory information is obtained for staff when appointed in line with Schedule 1 of the 2011 Fostering Regulations and the National Minimum Standards
- ✦ To support foster carers to ensure they provide the best possible care to children by taking into account their wishes and feelings and supporting their safety, education, health, enjoyment, and preparation for future
- ✦ To ensure all of our children have happy memories of being in our care that will help promote their welfare and support them to heal and grow
- ✦ To provide learning and reflection opportunities to our staff and foster carers so they develop an increased understanding of the children's behavioral and emotional needs through an increased understanding of attachment-based principles
- ✦ To recruit individuals and families from all parts of the community and with different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and life experiences, thereby offering local authorities a range of placements, reflecting the wide range of children's needs
- ✦ To observe the needs-led approach not the resource-led approach for the placement matching, with due consideration to careful matching of children with foster carers based on the particular needs of the child to the carer's skills, experiences, and circumstances
- ✦ To regularly review the stability of placements to ensure support packages remain relevant and resourced, minimizing the potential for placement breakdown and poor outcomes for children
- ✦ 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
- ✦ The welfare, safety, and needs of children and young people are paramount and at the heart of our work. We will ensure that there is a comprehensive risk assessment and safer care plan for all children and young people and review it on a regular basis
- ✦ To ensure that best practice in safeguarding children is understood and implemented by every adult in the organization including staff members, foster carers, and people working on behalf of UFS
- ✦ To have robust strategies and measures in place for the quality assurance and development of the fostering service, taking into account the wishes, feelings, and views of the children and foster carers





- ✚ To maintain secure, separate, and accurate records for children, carers, and staff and ensure access to such records, in line with the legislation
- ✚ Ensure compliance with National Fostering Regulations and Standards

*The outcomes will be achieved by embedding therapeutic parenting practices throughout the Agency. The Agency is committed to making a difference to children and young people by adopting mainly Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Parenting and Practice (DDP), and Secure Base Model. The use of therapeutic models will help foster carers to discover the uniqueness of the child and to notice their lives of thoughts and feelings and wishes that lie under their behavior.*

## **6. PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION**

Spending time with children, talking to them, and making sure that you are actively listening and taking seriously what they say is an essential safeguarding activity. (NCB Communicating with children 2006)

At United Fostering, we value feedback from children, young people, foster carers, and their birth children. The views and wishes of children and young people can be a powerful focus for intervention and is a key to promoting positive change and maximizing the potential for positive development.

UFS will ensure that children feel listened to and they can develop their own stories about what is happening in their lives. We will ensure that children are involved in decisions about them.

Our supervising social worker will take regular observations/ feedbacks from foster carers and children during their visits. We will ensure that they take time to know the young person, what they enjoy, what their concerns are, and what are their ambitions and aspirations.

We will offer support groups for foster carers, foster children, and young people as well as for birth children.

Drop-in sessions for foster carers to meet with the senior managers at least twice a year.

In addition to the above United Fostering will have a Foster Carer's Association and Youth Panel that will put children and young people's voices at the heart of everything we do.



## **7. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

This is in accordance with NMS 2011 standard 25.

The leadership and management team sets the strategic direction and oversees 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 organization's policies and procedures.

The **Registered Manager** is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the service and staff supervision, ensuring the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people looked after and all the members of the fostering households, through promoting excellent quality standards in practice. He is also responsible for managing and coordinating the social work activities of the agency, ensuring effective and efficient service provision within the legal and regulatory framework for foster care. The Registered Manager has a wealth of knowledge and experience in children's services and extensive management experience in fostering for both local authorities as well as leading Independent Fostering Agency.

The Registered Manager has played an integral role in the development of policies and procedures and quality assurance models for the service. The Registered Manager is a qualified social worker registered with the Social Work England and has two master's degrees in Business Administration (MBA) and Business Economics (MBE). He also studied at Coventry University and completed Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Practice in Social Work in 2017. He has completed DDP Level 1 and Level 2 trainings and the 'Trains the Trainers' program to deliver Foundation for Attachments programme within the parenting groups. He has implemented the DDP model of practice in his previous roles, he has a thorough knowledge of the nurturing attachments, House Models of Parenting, PACE, the group work process, the mind-minded narratives, and the theory that underpins them.

The **Responsible Individual** is a qualified Social Worker to Master level followed by Practice Educator course from Coventry University. He has completed MBA (Human Resources Management) from Staffordshire University. He has over 10 year's employment history in both the private and statutory roles. The Responsible Individual is a highly enthusiastic and motivated professional, with a real interest in helping children, young people, and their families. He possesses excellent communication and interpersonal skills, coupled with a highly organized and systematic approach to work. Before joining United Fostering, the Responsible Individual worked as Team Manager for an independent fostering agency in Midlands. The Responsible Individual oversees business development and strategic direction of travel which includes fostering recruitment, financial viability, human resources, and facilities management.



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The Registered Manager and Responsible Individual will receive regular reflective supervision by an Independent Consultant to ensure that they remain well equipped to fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities.

## **8. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION**

*“There is a need to recognize the diversity and individuality of children who become looked after, and to take account of their circumstances and needs, and their varied pathways and experiences within the system, from the point of entry, through childhood, and into adult life”.* (Boddy, 2013)

UFS is committed to celebrating equality and diversity both within the organization and in the wider context. UFS wishes to create a diverse team of carers and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures.

At UFS we fully understand that children coming to foster care can be discriminated against because for several reasons such as their identity, including a disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or even the fact they are in care. UFS considers the needs of all young people referred in the areas of race, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, ability, and geographic origin, and will endeavor to promote each young person’s sense of identity through appropriately matched placements, and direct work about a young person’s cultural background. There is a commitment to challenging individuals or groups who discriminate against any of our young people in any way and diversity is celebrated through daily living experiences and educational programs. Where children or carers have specific communication requirements, UFS will commission services to meet those specific needs.

We believe that culture and diversity paint the fabric of life and as such we are committed to celebrating a variety of festivals and events in addition to providing a proactive anti-discriminatory working environment. UFS celebrates the uniqueness of individuals to create an environment of respect and acceptance. UFS encourages children to believe and have confidence in themselves. We encourage children to develop respect for themselves and others.

All children and young people have a right to feel confident that this is a safe and healthy environment. For example, if foster carers are worried that bullying is happening to the child, they share this concern with the supervising social worker to plan strategies for dealing with the problem. UFS will also participate in Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness of bullying of children and young people, in schools and elsewhere, and to highlight ways of preventing and responding to it.

UFS aims to recruit people from all backgrounds to reflect the demographics of the regions we cover. Our Equality Policy applies to staff, foster carers, children, and young people. Training is mandatory for all staff and carers to assist them to understand and



value diversity. We want all children and young people in our placements, our foster carers, and employees to feel valued and treated equally and fairly.

UFS will ensure that our children are provided with personalized care to promote their social and emotional development, this will enable them to be emotionally resilient and with positive self-esteem. Children and young people will exercise choice and independence, within the context of the foster family's decision-making. (NMS 2011-Standard 2)

UFS will ensure that our foster carers have access to care plans and have as much information about all aspects of a child's life as possible. Foster carers will promote family time and help the children to make, maintain and value friendships. They will notice and praise children's unique characteristics and strengths.

## **9. PLACEMENT SERVICES**

*“Relationships with people who care for and about children are the golden thread in children's lives, and ... the quality of a child's relationships is the lens through which we should view what we do and plan to do”. (The Care Inquiry, 2013)*

UFS will offer a wide range of placement for children and young people aged 0-18 years. UFS practice will be needs-led, not resource-led when matching children, we promote the 'Team Around the Child' approach. To achieve this, we will recruit foster carers from all walks of life that offer quality care in a family setting. UFS can therefore provide responsive and reflective placements for:

### ***Emergency Fostering***

Emergency foster carers take children at short notice, at any time of the day or night. Children usually only stay for a few days while longer-term plans are considered.

### ***Short-term Fostering***

There is no formally agreed definition of short-term fostering in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales. However, it is usually taken to mean that it is planned for the child to remain in the placement for only a specified, or until certain tasks have been completed. The child may have been placed in an emergency.

There might be a plan to return the child to their own family, to seek a long-term foster placement or adoption.

### ***Bridging Fostering***

Bridging fostering for children or young people while permanency plans are being formulated. In such placements, foster carers work with children/young people and their families toward reunification or prepare children/young people for joining adoptive or



long-term/permanent fostering families, or for moving to a semi-independent or an independent living arrangement.

### ***Long term/permanent Fostering***

There is no formally agreed definition of long-term fostering in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, but it is generally understood to mean that the plan is for the child to remain in the placement until they are an adult. It is sometimes referred to as permanent fostering.

### **Respite Fostering**

Respite fostering is provided to UFS foster carers a break or offer additional support if they do not have their support network. In addition, respite is also offered to other fostering services foster carers and is available to support placement demands and needs.

### ***Complex and Enhanced Needs Fostering***

These fostering arrangements require specialist care for children with complex and enhanced needs. Foster carers will receive a great deal of support who offer a home to children with complex needs, and although this requires a huge commitment to time and training, can be a valuable, rewarding, and enriching experience.

### ***Solo Fostering***

UFS will be able to provide solo placements to local authorities. When occasionally a child or a young person has a very specific and complex need and requires a high level of support, monitoring, and supervision, the foster care will be required to provide constant individual attention and supervision to support the placement which prohibits the use of any remaining placement. Therefore, they cannot have any other child or young person in placement.

### ***Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Fostering***

Many asylum-seeking young people have been separated from their families, either in their Homeland or during transit to the UK. As you can imagine, these children are often distressed and frightened as a result of the challenges and often overwhelming experiences they have been through. Fostering young people who are seeking asylum does have its challenges but is also hugely rewarding as you start seeing them settle into their new life in the UK. In some cases, the children will speak little or no English. UFS will recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds and provide support to care for unaccompanied children and young people from outside the UK.

### ***Parent and Child Fostering***

Arrangements can be made for a parent and their child (frequently a mother and baby) to live with foster carers, usually for a period of assessment of their parenting abilities by social care. It may be that either the child, or the parent, or both are looked after children, but this is not always the case.



### **Fostering of Sibling Groups**

Sibling groups are for brothers and sisters who all are placed together into a foster care household. UFS believes in keeping siblings together within a family environment unless it is deemed inappropriate by the placing Authority.

### **Staying Put Arrangements**

UFS will support foster carers with a staying put arrangement, just which is not the same as a foster placement. The young person staying put, who must be a former relevant child, is no longer a looked after child. They are a young adult and a care leaver. The foster carer is no longer acting in the capacity of foster carer for that young adult; they are their 'former foster carer'.

UFS will ensure to work within the local authorities' framework to provide the right type of placement needed for the children. Our main motive is to provide safe and secure foster homes to children, children's safety and welfare will be paramount in all foster placements. We will ensure that our foster carers have qualities of security, attentiveness, friendliness, and empathy so that they can build and sustain relationships with traumatized children (Cairns, 2002). Resilience is another important attribute, as some behavior and circumstances may trigger distressing feelings for carers (NSPCC, 2013).

## **10. RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND APPROVAL**

As we are aware foster care is entrusting vulnerable children and young person's welfare with a family who will help them to heal and overcome their past trauma with care, nurture, empathy, respect, and love. A well-structured assessment process of the prospective carers, therefore, becomes imperative to ensure that the children are in safe spaces, with an opportunity to realize their capabilities to the fullest extent. UFS's Assessment approach is a detailed plan that assimilates all relevant information about the applicant's family that helps the UFS team to decide if the applicant's family can become a foster carer or not with UFS.

UFS will ensure to use a different model of assessments (questioning, procedural, and exchange) and the assessments will be based on a relationship of trust, openness, and honesty. We will ensure an analytical approach to our assessments and this will be supported by good reflective supervision. We will be committed to recruiting and training foster families who can provide our children a sense of safety with supervision and structure, help them to regulate difficult emotions, and use empathy before discipline. UFS's aims are;

- To select safe, capable, and nurturing foster carers for vulnerable children
- Our assessments will be rigorous and will have a safeguarding focus



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- We will ensure that our assessments are evidence-based to judge the suitability of the potential carers to provide a child with a safe and caring environment
  - A key area will be exploring the motivation of applicants to take on caring for other people's children
  - The assessment will explore sensitive issues around disability, culture, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation
  - The assessment will be subject to critical appraisal and effective analysis
  - To use professional curiosity and authority when undertaking assessments and interventions whilst maintaining a position of partnership
  - To maintain awareness of own professional limitations and knowledge gaps, using supervision effectively to enhance practice

UFS follows the Fostering Regulations Stage 1 and 2 (sometimes carried out parallel) to carry out the requisite checks and testimonials of references.

The steps we follow to carry out the process is guided by the Fostering Regulations and are as follows:

### **Step 1: Assessment Process**

#### *Interest and Enquiry*

Upon receiving an initial interest through email or a telephone conversation, a member of our team will follow up the lead within the next 72 working hours whereby all queries of the applicants will be clarified on the viability of engaging in a fostering role and how feasible it will be for them. Once the applicant's initial application is vetted internally by the team to decide on whether the applicant is feasible or not, we will then proceed to the next stage or cancel the process altogether. If the applicant is found viable to proceed by all parties, we will then plan a home visit. We conduct these initial visits within a fortnight of the first inquiry placed with us.

#### *Initial Home Visit*

In keeping with Stage 1 and 2 of the Fostering Regulation, our team member will visit the applicant's house where s/he will explain in detail the process and requirements to the applicant and their partner or family living in the same house where they are proposing the fostering placement for the children. During this discussion, our team members will also complete a brief assessment of the applicant/s. This visit may also be used by the applicants to clarify as many doubts as they might have at this point and seek suggestions on improvement and modifications to the house etc. This step is primarily the first step for the prospective foster carers to build their understanding and their capabilities to address their preparedness for the exciting experience ahead. After an in-depth discussion with them, the social worker will present her/his recommendations to their respective fostering team manager which will be used to decide on whether or not the applicant/s may be considered for a fostering role. If selected, then the next step of the detailed assessment stage will begin.



### *The Skills-to-Foster Preparation Training*

After the home visit and initial approval of the applicant/s for the next step, they will be invited to a mandatory preparation course named 'Skills to Foster' which is an interactive, informative, and engaging module that provides the applicants with first-hand information on the skills, knowledge and value base needed for fostering and how one can prepare themselves for the journey ahead. The facilitation is strategically conducted by the Managers, Social Workers, and other approved foster carers and young people who have experience of the care system. This course may be carried out before, during, or after the Assessment process is undertaken (but before the panel). The feedback from the training will also be used in the assessment process.

### Stage 1 – Assessment

After the home visit and upon the decision to proceed with the application to foster, we will send an application pack to the applicants which would include the following documents:

- Application Form
- Assessment Information and Application Guidance, and
- DBS Check and Mentor Information

The assessment stage will involve a couple of inspections/checks at different levels - such as the local authority, probation, finance, employment, and education history, along with carrying out the personal references. The Health Assessment of the applicant/s with their respective doctor is also a mandatory check. The DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check will also be carried out on all applicant/s and their family members residing in the household who are above 18 years of age. Upon submission of all these forms and checks to the agency, which will be reported to the Registered Manager, he will take the final call for continuing the application ahead or terminating it at this stage. Once it is decided to proceed to Stage 2, a qualified Social Worker will then be assigned to carry out the full fostering assessment, namely the Form F. In any case, the applicants will be informed of the decision within 10 days of receipt of the final safeguarding check.

### Stage 2- Assessment

This stage begins once the Registered Manager confirms the progress of the applicant to a full fostering assessment. The assigned Social Worker will carry out the Form- F assessment and submit the report which will be presented to an independent Fostering Panel. The applicant/s will be advised to meet the fostering panel members who will submit their recommendation for the approval of the applicant/s as a prospective foster carer/s. These recommendations will aid the final decision that the Decision Maker would be undertaking.





Keeping in mind that every assessment is an individual process, and the timeline may vary per case, it is however expected that Stage 2 will be successfully carried out and completed within 4 months. This stage also entails active interaction of the applicant/s with different stakeholders, from qualified and experienced members of the UFS who are readily available for advice and guidance at all times. We encourage the applicant/s to utilize this resource as much as they need.

Here, we would like to mention that for carers who are currently with another agency and have shown interest to transfer to the UFS, the Stage 1 and 2 Assessment may be carried out simultaneously and ideally within a 20-week timeline, subject to applicant/s readiness.

### **Approval**

UFS has a diverse independent fostering panel that will make a recommendation as to whether or not to approve as foster carers to UFS's Decision Maker. The Decision Maker will consider the panel's recommendation alongside all the other information gathered during the assessment before making a final decision to approve the foster carers.

Decision Maker will inform the applicants of the decision in writing, where he decides to approve the applicants he will confirm this in writing with the specific terms of approval. In the situation where potential applicants are not approved, Decision Maker will notify the applicants of the reasons (a "qualifying determination") and will invite them to submit written representation within 28 days of the notice or to request a review by an independent review panel through the IRM (further details can be provided).

United Fostering has the following Decision Maker:

Decision Maker – Mohammad Asim (Responsible Individual)

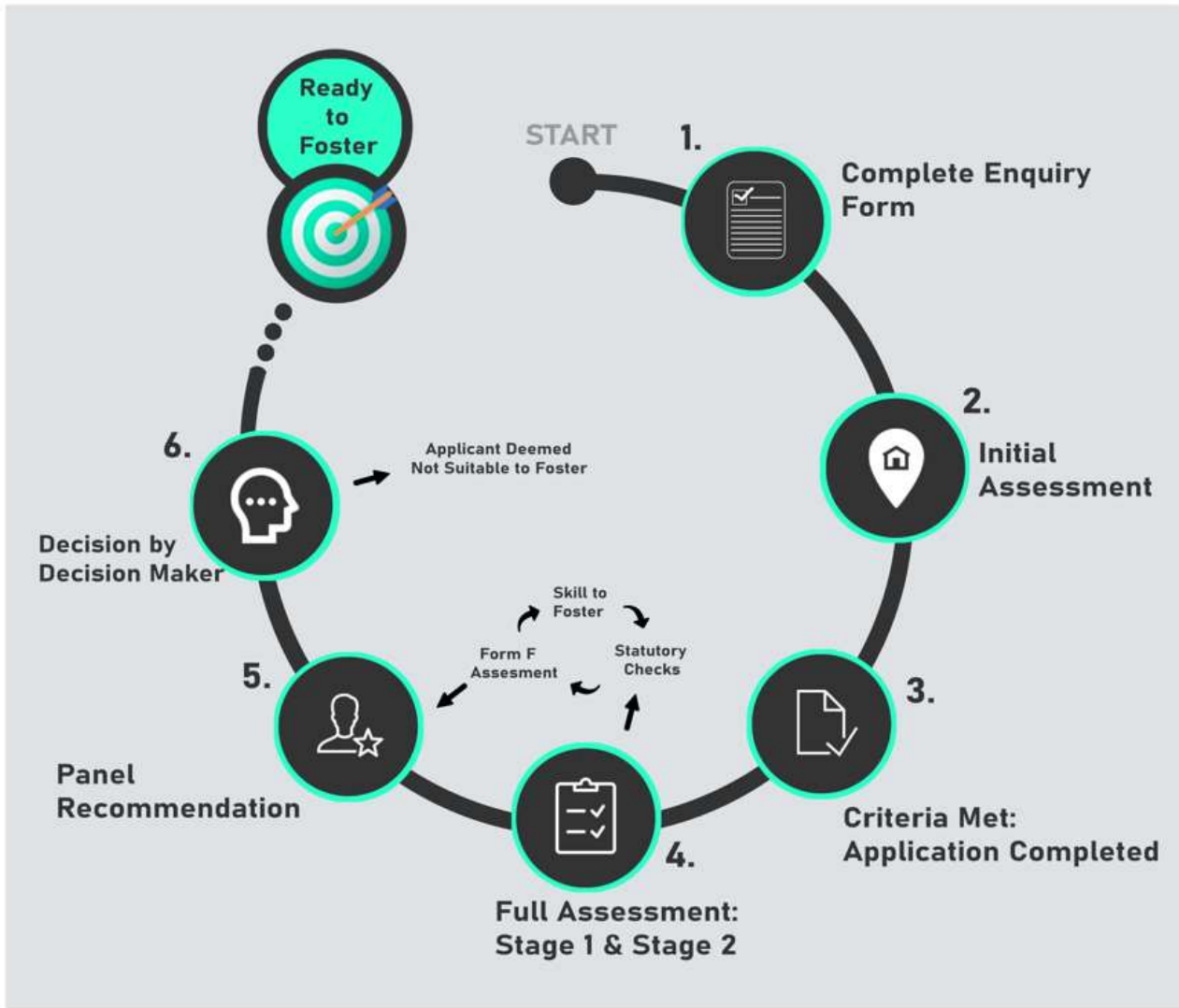
### **Post Approval**

After the foster carer's approval, they will get an allocated supervising social worker who will give comprehensive induction training to foster carers. The induction will include information about UFS, different policies/procedures, multi-agency working, fostering network roles, and training opportunities with UFS. As a foster carer, you will sign a Foster Carer Agreement that sets out UFS's expectations about fostering role in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.



# UNITED FOSTERING SERVICES

## Assessment and Approval Process



## 11. REVIEWS OF FOSTER CARERS

All foster carers approved by UFS will have a foster home review to attend annually. UFS has clear guidance and procedure to complete foster carers and will review, which is in line with fostering regulations and the national minimum standard of fostering (Fostering Regulations, Reg 28; Fostering Guidance 5.59-5.63). Apart from the first



annual review, there can be other significant events or change where a review may be called which include:

- If there are concerns regarding the foster carer's practice
- If there has been a serious incident
- If there is a request to change of approval terms/registration details
- If there is a change in the fostering household

Reflection is the key to good practice- thinking about experiences, attending to our emotions, and using the range of theories to explore meanings. (Hollands, 2004) UFS will ensure that annual reviews are an opportunity to reflect over the previous year of fostering, and to do that we will seek several feedbacks (foster carers, foster children, birth children, social worker, IRO, School, CAMHS, etc.), acknowledge what has gone well, and also to consider any challenges as well as exploring the support needs of a foster carer.

National Minimum Standard (NMS,2011) 20.6 sets out that reviews should include an appraisal of a carer's performance, consideration of training and development needs, and a review of the carer's development plan. Standard 13.9 emphasizes that areas of concern or need for additional support that is identified between reviews should be addressed at that time and should not wait until a planned review.

UFS will present the first year of review to the fostering panel and subsequent reviews within three years of the previous review to the fostering panel. This means foster carers will be required to meet with panel members every 3 years.

UFS will appoint an IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) to undertake the review meetings with the foster carers. The review recommendations will be presented to the Panel/ Decision Maker for approval.

## **12. REFERRALS AND MATCHING**

***“Matching a child with a foster carer or adopter is one of the ‘turning points’ (Schofield et al 2011b) in a child’s life. Successful matching depends on good assessments, clear support plans, careful decision making, and a high level of information sharing between professionals.”***

**([fosteringandadoption.rip.org.uk/topics/matching/](http://fosteringandadoption.rip.org.uk/topics/matching/))**

UFS plays a key role in matching children and young people with foster carers. The matching process adheres to the requirements set out in the Fostering National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations. UFS works very closely with the local authorities following a referral to ensure the correct match with the foster carers. Our matching will be needs-led not resource-led, a good fit between the needs of the child and the skills of the foster carer.



We will ensure robust preparation for the placement before the child arrives except for emergency placements. This will include sharing detailed background information about children with foster carers to enable them an informed decision, arranging pre-placement and post-placement meetings, sharing foster carer's pen profiles, and supervising social worker's profiles with children. We will complete comprehensive risk assessments and a safer caring plan for all children and young people.

### **13. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CARERS**

Children and young people looked after by foster carers may have a highly complex set of needs due to the trauma experienced before coming into care. There is a corresponding increased demand for foster carers to meet these needs, and therefore defined learning and development framework for the foster carer is significant to help address this.

UFS is committed to supporting and enabling foster carers to grow and develop through varied and comprehensive Learning and Development opportunities. UFS provides the support and development to foster carers that enhances the holistic and 'wrap around' approach the child or young person may need. UFS believes therapeutic parenting approaches and a therapeutic environment is the essential ingredient in providing a safe, positive and stable care experience to children.

We are committed to providing high-quality learning and development opportunities that are accessible, credible, and relevant to all our foster carers. The training program developed by UFS is in line with National Minimum Standards to ensure that all Foster Carers receive relevant induction and continued professional development.

UFS recognizes the complexity of fostering and the need for relevant, updated, consistent, and accessible learning for foster carers and their families. The core training framework will enable foster carers to increase and refine their existing skills and knowledge. Foster carers will have a safe place in which they can share their experiences, learn from each other and build a support network.

UFS training opportunities assist foster carers to understand the reasons behind the behavior and see it as a communication, enabling them to increase their professional confidence and thereby contribute to ongoing planning and thinking regarding the care of the child placed with them.

UFS establishes a Personal and Professional Development Plan (PPDP) for each carer. The Agency requires all newly registered foster carers to evidence their skills in a portfolio, required as part of the National Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for foster carers. Carers are assisted in this task by their designated Fostering Social Worker and our team of trainers.



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In addition to the Skills to Foster course which is completed as part of the assessment, we offer a comprehensive training program and workshops (Group Sessions, E-Learning, Virtual training, and one-to-one training) for our foster carers.

Following assessment and approval, all foster carers receive a thorough induction. This includes ensuring that carers are clear about the policies and procedures, including Safeguarding/Child Protection, Safer Caring, and Health and Safety.

Foster carers can help children recover from difficult experiences by providing a 'secure base' for children. Therefore, in addition to the above, the agency has also introduced a Secure Base Model approach in working with Foster Carers and Looked After Children. We have introduced a session on behavior and secure base model as part of the preparatory Skills to Foster course as well as post-approval training on the subject for all our foster carers to familiarize them with the five dimensions of caregiving. This will enable them to incorporate these in their daily practice to help children to move towards greater security. The secure base model gives them a better understanding of the attachment issues enabling them to manage the major emotional or behavioral crisis.

We have also introduced the use of a Secure Base Model approach in the assessment of prospective foster carers. The model provides a framework for considering the skills and capacities associated with offering care as part of family life in foster care and the final analysis sections of all our assessments of prospective foster carers will include these dimensions.

One of the key approaches we use in UFS is Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Parenting, and Practice (DDP). This is a model for professionals and parents to support children to recover from trauma and disrupted attachments through the parenting, education, and care they receive as well as in some cases therapy. DDP aims to ensure the child has the best possible relationship with one or two adults who have a parenting role through day-to-day care. In a nutshell, we are all about developing relationships and investing a huge amount in what we see as the key relationship, between foster carer(s) and their young person.

UFS social workers and foster carers will be supported to complete training in DDP and DDP-focused support groups utilizing this approach specifically focusing on using PACE.

[Parenting with PACE](#) (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy) is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating, and behaving that aims to make the [child](#) feel safe. It is based upon how [parents](#) connect with their very young infants and their children e.g. - As with young toddlers, with safety, the toddler can begin to explore. Using PACE, with children who have been troubled the child after a while may begin to start to trust adults; children may start to be able to connect to themselves or get closer emotionally to an adult. (<http://ddpnetwork.org/glossary/pace/>)



## Specialist Courses will be offered by UFS-

- Parenting with PACE
- Secure Base Model
- Signs of Safety Model
- Social Pedagogy
- 6 Weekly Foundations for Attachments- is based on the DDP model and introduces carers to four significant challenges of parenting children whose capacity to emotionally connect with caregivers has been compromised.
- Reflective Supervision Group
- DDP Level 1 and 2 (After completing all mandatory and specialist training)

## 14. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF CARERS

Fostering is an immensely rewarding role, but it can often be challenging. Therefore, the supervision and support foster carers receive from the fostering agency becomes very crucial and can make a difference to the stability and success of the placement. We aim to provide high-quality reflective supervision and support to our foster carers.

We will ensure that the support to the foster carer is tailored to the individual needs of the child and matched to the developmental stages of the child. The following list encompasses the main areas of support available to our foster carers:

- + **Allocated Supervising Social Worker**
- + **Effective Out of Hours Support**
- + **Highly Commended Training Program**
- + **Therapeutic Parenting Support**
- + **Access to Therapists when requested**
- + **Foster Carers Supervision visits**
- + **Reflective Group Supervisions**
- + **Telephone calls**
- + **Duty Supervising Social Workers so that foster carers always have someone to talk**
- + **Unannounced Visits**
- + **Social meetings/Support groups**
- + **Support for Sons and Daughters**
- + **Social Events and Activities**
- + **Newsletters**
- + **Foster carers handbook**
- + **Buddying Support**
- + **Foster Carers Association and Youth Panel**
- + **Fostering Network Membership**
- + **Financial Support**



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✚ Best IT system to record and information sharing

## **15. SAFEGUARDING, QUALITY ASSURANCE, AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The safeguarding of every child/young person entrusted in our care. UFS has embedded a culture of safeguarding within the organization in line with the Fostering Regulations (regulation 11 and 12). There is a comprehensive suite of Safeguarding Policies in place and Safeguarding practice is threaded through all areas of the Agency. UFS ensures that children feel safe and they are safe and promotes their safety and welfare in all fostering placements.

All staff and foster carers will be trained in appropriate safer care practice and UFS will pursue the culture of partnership working with other agencies and does not work in isolation from them. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and depends on effective joint working between staff, carers and relevant agencies, and practitioners.

The completion of quality assurance and performance management are UFS's approach to high-quality social care practice and to improve the outcomes for our children. To maintain this, UFS will take service users' feedbacks, monitor key performance indicators, and conduct regular file audits. We will produce a regular fostering agency report in line with Regulation 35 of the Fostering Regulations. This is to monitor and evaluate the provision of services to ensure services provided are effective and the quality of these services is of an appropriate standard.

UFS will have a systematic process to ensure the quality of children's outcomes. This will include how children are supported to achieve their full potential, evaluate impact (including education, physical health, and their emotional well-being).

At United Fostering, we value feedback from children, young people, foster carers, and their birth children. The views and wishes of children and young people can be a powerful focus for intervention and is a key to promoting positive change and maximising the potential for positive development.

Reflective supervision for staff and foster carers is provided on a regular basis to monitor the quality and performance of the practice. All staff has an annual performance appraisal. There is the observation of social workers' practice by their manager once a year.

Foster carers and staff will be attending mandatory group supervision, which will provide them the opportunity to reflect and discuss pertinent situations with children.



Themed audits will also be undertaken as required or when there are concerns about a particular area of practice, for example, children missing from the placements.

Fostering panel will play a quality assurance role and regular meetings with the panel chair to ensure the improvement of the agency's overall practice.

Key outcomes will include evidence that children placed in foster care are well cared for and are achieving good outcomes. The Registered Manager produces a monitoring report (Regulation 35 of the Fostering Regulations) which reviews recruitment, approvals, and areas to be monitored.

The Agency utilizes the National Minimum Standards to benchmark and guide services as well as qualitative feedback from our carers, children, and young people.

## **16. FOSTERING PANEL**

In accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011 (Reg. 25, NMS Standard 14) the UFS's fostering panel plays a key quality assurance role and provides objectivity and challenge to the Agency in the interests of children.

The panel has a 'core' membership drawn from a central list. Panel members hold the relevant qualifications and experience and UFS ensures the panel is always quorate. UFS will ensure to recruit panel members from diverse backgrounds to reflect our commitment to equality and diversity.

## **17. COMPLAINTS, CHILD PROTECTION, AND SAFEGUARDING**

UFS ensures 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, UFS expects its staff and carers to positively embrace diversity and treat individuals; adults and children alike, with respect.

UFS has a widely available and comprehensive complaints policy, which fully details the complaints procedure that is followed. A child, a parent or carer of a child, a foster carer, or anyone else for whom the Agency has agreed to provide a service can make a complaint under this procedure.

Individuals are also able to make complaints on behalf of others if it is considered they have "sufficient interest" to do so.





If you wish to make a complaint or have any concerns about a child in care with United Fostering or would like to have a copy of the complaint policy, please contact:

**Mohammad Asim– Complaints Officer & Responsible Individual**

**Contact**

**United Fostering Services**

**101 Lockhurst Lane, Coventry, CV6 5SF**

**Tel – 02476993632**

**Safeguarding**

For any Safeguarding matters, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer – Dhirendra Shrivastava (Registered Manager)

Tel – 02476993632

For details please also refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

UFS is inspected as a fostering provider under the Care Standards Act 2000 / Fostering Service Regulations 2011. Please find details below for Ofsted.

**Address:**

Ofsted

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M1 2WD

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**United Fostering Services**

*NURTURE CONFIDENCE & SECURITY*