



# Havering Fostering Service

# Statement of Purpose

## 2023- 2024

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<b>Reviewer</b>	Carly Downing
<b>Approved</b>	Tara Geere
<b>Version</b>	1

# Contents

Introduction	Page 4
The Statement of Values	Page 6
Aims and Objectives	Page 7
Recruitment of Prospective Foster Carers	Page 8
Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers	Page 9
Supervision and Support for Foster Carers	Page 15
Placements of Children	Page 20
Delegated Authority	Page 21
Education	Page 22
Therapy and Mental Health Provision	Page 22
Storage, Access and Foster Carers Records	Page 24
Allegations, Complaints and Comments	Page 25
Appendix A - The Structure of the Fostering Service	Page 27
Appendix B - Qualifications and Experience	Page 28
Ofsted Contact Details	Page 29
Contact Us	Page 29

# Introduction

The London Borough of Havering's Fostering Service believes that wherever possible children are best looked after within their own families, with their parents playing an integral role in their upbringing. However, where this is not possible Havering Children's Services are committed to providing alternative high quality homes to children in care within a family environment.

The Fostering Service In Havering sits within the Children's Services Department , as part of our corporate parenting offer to children in care.

The statement of purpose has been written in accordance with the legislative requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 & 2013
- Fostering Services Regulations 2002 & Minimum Standards
- The Care Standards Act 2000 and accompanying National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- GDPR

It explains how we work to ensure we are improving outcomes for the children and young people in our care.

We aim to ensure that the Fostering Service is conducted in a manner consistent with our Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed, updated and modified whenever necessary, but not less than annually. Within 28 days of any amendment the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose will be sent to the Chief Inspector of OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) and published on our website. A copy of this Statement of Purpose is available upon request to anyone who requires it.



**You take  
care of  
them**

**We'll take  
care of  
the rest**



# The Statement of Values

The London Borough of Havering's Fostering Service has centred its values on the Children in Care & Care Leavers pledge.

## The Pledge states that:



**We will listen to you – about things that are important to you and your life, and about the care that you receive from us.**



**We will look after you and treat you well – We will help and support you to sort out any problems you may have. We will ensure you have a supportive and caring home and will respect you as individuals**



**We will help you achieve your full potential in education – We will provide you with the support to do well in education and help you grow in confidence, be proud of yourself and make positive choices.**



**We will help you keep healthy and well – We will support you to stay physically and mentally well, and will respond quickly and with care when you are feeling unwell.**

The Fostering Service supports and contributes to this pledge by ensuring children in our care receive effective support and live in homes that enables them to fulfil their potential and make them feel safe and valued. Havering's Fostering Service aims to help maximise children's health and educational opportunities through the assessment, support and review of carers, who provide a wide range of alternative homes for children in care.

Havering upholds the United Nations convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) to grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding. As stated wherever possible we would support children within birth or their extended family. Therefore, we aim to keep families together and reunite children with their families at the earliest appropriate opportunity. When this is not possible, Havering's Fostering Service will find a home that allows the child or young person to grow in confidence and independence.

# Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of Havering's Fostering Service is to provide the highest quality of substitute family care for looked after children. It will seek to do this by working in collaboration with all departments within the local authority and with our partners including neighbouring boroughs through our joint Emergency Duty Team.

## Aims and objectives

- To provide the best possible foster homes for children and young people to enable them to reach their full potential.
- To provide a home that meets the requirements of the child's care plan and wherever possible reflects the child's ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic background.
- To place siblings together wherever possible and when it is in the best interests of the children.
- To recruit, assess, train and support all prospective and approved foster carers and family and friend's connected carers, so they can provide a wide range of local homes, which meet the diverse needs of children and young people in a safe and nurturing environment.
- To support and advise all those affected by the fostering process.
- To actively promote fostering and family and friends care as the framework to secure alternative homes for children, unless there is clear evidence to suggest that this is not appropriate.
- To ensure there are clear procedures for assessing, monitoring and controlling the activities of the Fostering Service to ensure high quality services.
- To ensure that cost effective services are provided and commissioned which maximise efficient use of resources and provide sufficient homes.
- To provide wherever possible local homes, to promote continuity and maintain family networks.
- To ensure that prospective foster carers from all the backgrounds have equality of access to the Fostering Service and are welcomed without prejudice, regardless of their Social Grades (J BURNHAM) Gender, Gender identity, Geography, Generation, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Culture, Caste, Education, Ethnicity, Economics, Spirituality, Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, marital or employment status and that they are considered on their individual merits.
- To ensure that the recruitment process is timely, respectful and fair, and delays are avoided.
- To ensure detailed placement plans are completed, including arrangements for Delegated Authority.

- To ensure monitoring systems are in place so that data can be gathered and used to inform service planning, strategy and procedures.
- To adhere to the principles of GDPR, data protection and Freedom of Information and to continue sound practice in managing confidential information.
- To raise the profile of the Fostering Service in Havering through a robust recruitment campaign, accessible information and advice.
- To ensure the effective matching of the child to the carer's skills and experience to enable the full range of the child's needs to be met.
- To minimise the number of places individual children live and ensuring that placement stability procedures are followed.
- For children to move on from foster care in a planned and positive way and with regards to those leaving care, contribute towards a smooth, transitional service for young people moving into adulthood.
- To consider with foster carers staying put arrangements for children and young people.
- To continue to increase the foster care voice in service improvements and engagement opportunities and ensure regular communication with carers.

## Recruitment of Prospective Foster Carers

The Fostering Service has a recruitment and retention strategy which is supported by an annual operational plan. This is based upon the needs of Havering's children in care and current data regarding placements, the shortfall of in house carers and the future need. The target set is to recruit a minimum of 10 foster carers per year to meet the demand, especially places to live for larger sibling groups, minority ethnic children, adolescents and baby placements.

Enquiries to become a foster carer are welcomed from people in Havering and surrounding areas, in accordance with our sufficiency strategy, regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. Applicants who are not already connected to the child must be 21 or over to be considered suitable to apply. It is a minimum requirement that all foster carers have a spare bedroom, unless they are only offering a placement to a baby 0-3 years.

## **Information sessions**

The Havering Fostering Service holds a monthly recruitment information session with the support of the Assessing Social Worker and the fostering ambassadors. This recruitment technique is supported by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) as research has shown that by having networks of approved foster carers and young people more potential recruits are likely to be attracted to the Service.

## **Enquiries**

The Fostering Ambassadors of the Fostering Service responds to enquiries from the public about fostering within 24 hours. A booklet on fostering is sent to all enquirers for further information. Enquirers will be able to have an initial discussion with a Fostering Ambassador. Basic information will be required at this stage. A questionnaire will be completed by a Fostering Ambassadors over the phone. If the application is deemed suitable an initial home visit will be arranged within 5 working days by the Assessing Social Worker.

# **Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers**

## **Initial Visit**

An Initial home visit is an opportunity for prospective foster carers to find out more details about fostering for Havering and the assessment process. It is an assessment undertaken by the Fostering Service to evaluate initial suitability to foster. The Havering Fostering Service has a commitment to aim to visit all suitable enquirers within 5 working days of their first enquiry. Following the information obtained during the visit, the Assessing Social Worker will make a recommendation as to whether the applicant should be progress to skills to foster course. This recommendation is endorsed by the Fostering Manager.

## **Application**

If all parties agree that fostering could be suitable for the family and that the basic criteria have been met, applicants are invited to submit an application. This will give the Service written consent to undertake necessary checks and collect the information required in Stage One.

## **Stage One - Statutory Checks**

National Minimum Standards 2011 and Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 require the Fostering Service to undertake statutory checks in Stage One.

These are:

- A DBS on all people in the household who are over 16 and anyone who will be supporting the foster carers, such as relatives and babysitters.
- Local Authority, employer and other agency checks (e.g. N.S.P.C.C., Probation Service).
- Child Health and Education checks carried out on any school-age children in the household.
- Three personal referees (one of whom can be a family member) requested to provide written references for the applicants as part of the assessment process. These people will be interviewed by the Assessing Social Worker.
- Interviews will be carried out on previous partners when there have been children from the partnership and other significant relationships.

## **Skills to Foster Training (STF)**

Preparation Training will be offered in Stage One. The Service offers a preparation training course, Skills to Foster (STF), providing there are a sufficient number of people to make up a viable group.

All applicants must attend the STF training course which is run by the Fostering Service. If an application to foster is made by a couple, both are required to attend the training. The applicants are provided with a certificate of attendance for participating in the Skills to Foster course.

There will be an evaluation sheet available the end of each session and through seeking user feedback the Service will continually aim to improve the training offered.

The course usually takes place over three days and is co-facilitated by Assessing Social Workers and Fostering Ambassadors, with the support of young people who were previously fostered. Those facilitating the course will provide written feedback on each applicant's participation in relation to the content of each session, and this material will be used to hold a feedback interview with each applicant to discuss the suitability of them moving to Stage Two of the assessment process.

## **Stage Two - Foster Carer Assessment**

The full assessment process is carried out in order to determine the applicant's suitability to meet the needs of any child/children likely to be placed with them. The assessment is completed using the BAAF Form F over a series of visits to the applicant's home. Applicants are encouraged to undertake self-assessment during the process and are given regular feedback. The assessment is carried out in line with National Minimum Fostering Standards 2011 and Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

The framework and timetable for undertaking the assessment will be drawn up in a written agreement between the Assessing Social Worker and the applicants at the start of the assessment. NMS guidance allows a period of 8 months for the completion of an assessment to be presented at the Panel. However, the Service aims to complete this with 5 months with a Panel date being set at 4-6 months from the date of receiving the application form.

During Stage One, consent is received to initiate checks to progress to Stage Two, however in some circumstances the Fostering Service may decide to move to Stage Two before all the checks in Stage One are completed.

The assessment is quality assured by the Fostering Team Manager to ensure that it meets the necessary requirements. Once the assessment is completed, the applicants will have an opportunity to read the assessment report, sign it and then the report is presented to the Havering Fostering Panel with a recommendation of approval.

## **Approval Stage**

The Fostering Panel is independent of the Fostering Service and is made up of a variety of professionals and independent members including an Independent Chairperson. Applicants are invited to the Fostering & Adoption Panel hearing their application, and although attendance is not compulsory, applicants are strongly encouraged to attend. The Panel will make their recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker whether to approve, defer for further information or not approve the application to foster. The applicant will be advised of the recommendation verbally on the day of the Panel. Unsuccessful applicants are informed of their right to make representations to the agency or apply for an Independent Review Mechanism Panel hearing within 28 days. Prior to approval, a Supervising Social Worker will be allocated to the foster carer to support and supervise the carer in the fostering task.

## **Fostering Panel**

The Fostering and Adoption Panel consists of:

- Experienced Chairperson with background in social care
- Various independent members with experience in fostering, adoption or social care
- Health representative
- Educational representative
- Social Work representative/s
- Panel Advisor
- Minute taker.

The Panel generally meets fortnightly to consider the following:

- Approval of new foster care applicants
- The annual review of Foster Carers, in their first year and then every three years thereafter
- If there is a change of circumstances or approval terms and when there has been a serious allegation or complaint
- Long term Fostering approval of child's care plan
- The match of a child to foster carers for a long term/permanent placement
- A Regulation 24 assessment extension request of 8 weeks
- To hear de-registrations of Foster Carers.

Panel members are supplied with copies of the reports to panel in the week preceding the Panel. The Fostering Service ensures the effective administration and functioning of the Fostering Panel, including the recruitment and annual appraisal of Panel members.

Havering operate a central list with suitably appointed individuals who are called upon to sit on Panel ensuring that each panel meeting is quorate and can hear fostering cases.

### **Family and Friends Foster Carers**

The temporary approval of a relative, friend or other connected person and the immediate placement of a child with a connected person under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Regulations 2010 is initially the responsibility of the child's Social Worker, Team Manager and the relevant Head of Service. They will establish if there is a suitable person who is connected to the child who can provide care if a child comes into care. When such arrangements have been made the Fostering Service will be notified immediately to undertake a Regulation 24 temporary approval assessment to establish if it is suitable to continue with this arrangement. If there is a positive outcome to the assessment, the recommendation to continue with the arrangement will be presented to the Head of Service to decide on the approval of the connected person as a temporary family and friends foster carer. For planned placements the arrangements will be made before the child is placed by undertaking an assessment and plan between the children's social work team and the Fostering Service.

The Special Guardianship team makes arrangements to undertake statutory checks, payment and begin the full assessment, and the Fostering Service provides a supervising Social Worker whilst the temporary approval is in place. Regulation 24 Family and Friends Foster Carers are supervised and supported in the same way as non-connected carers and the assessment will either be presented to the Fostering Panel for full approval or will be considered for a Special Guardianship arrangement.



# Supervision and Support for Foster Carers

The Service recognises that good communication, supervision, support and development opportunities for foster carers are vital to the retention of carers in the Borough. It is important that foster carers' work is recognised as providing the major component in meeting the needs of looked after children in Havering. Once an approval decision has been made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) the foster carer will receive written details about their approval and registration. They will meet with their Assessor and Supervising Social Worker (SSW) and be given a welcome pack including two copies of the Foster Care Agreement to read and sign, retaining one copy for themselves.

All carers (including family and friend's carers) have an allocated SSW, who visit foster carers regularly in accordance with National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations. The SSW visits and telephones the carer regularly whilst the child is in placement. All visits and support will be tailored to meet the needs of a Carer and the child in placement and there will be an increase in support and supervision if requested, or deemed necessary by the Carers or the SSW. When children are not in placement the SSW will continue to visit at intervals of not more than every 6 weeks unless it has been agreed by the Fostering Service Manager that visits can be less frequent, for example when there is a fixed and agreed break from fostering. In some instances, and where there is a prolonged absence, an updated assessment will need to be completed and taken back to Panel.

As part of the monitoring of the work of foster carers, there will be two unannounced visits per year by the Supervising Social Worker to the foster carers' home. If at any time the Fostering Service believes it is necessary to increase the number of unannounced visits these will be undertaken.

The Placements officer and/or a duty Social Worker are available daily to offer support and advice to all Havering Foster Carers if their allocated SSW is away from the office and is not contactable. There is also an out of hour's telephone line available in the evenings, weekends and bank holidays to support carers which is run by Havering's Fostering Service.

The Emergency Social Work Duty Team is available to all foster carers when the Fostering Service is closed, at weekends, bank holidays and after office hours. This is run in partnership with 3 other local authorities; Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge & Waltham Forest.

## **Independent Support for Foster Carers**

Foster carers are eligible for individual membership of Foster Talk. Foster Talk provides foster carers with a comprehensive range of specialised support services that benefit the whole of the fostering household. This allows them access to advice and support, including legal advice, independently of the service. The Havering Fostering Service will automatically on approval pay for the foster carer's annual subscription.

Further details of the benefits of joining Foster Talk can be found on their [website](#) or by contacting Foster Talk on : 01527 836 910.

## **Havering Foster Carers Association**

In Havering we are fortunate to have a very active and supportive Foster Carer Association, all of whom are foster carers themselves, who meet with and work closely and positively with the Fostering Team on a whole range of topics throughout the year. When you, our new in house foster carers are approved at Panel, contact details are forwarded to Havering Foster Carer's Association and a member of the committee, will contact you to introduce themselves and inform you of the work and activities of the HFCA.

## **Fostering Ambassadors**

We currently have three ambassadors positions in Havering. The Ambassadors work with the recruitment team to promote fostering for Havering. They attend local events across the borough to bring awareness to the local community about looking after children who aren't able to live with their own families. They also support the fostering team at our skills to foster training for new applicants. Due to the ambassador's roles as foster carers, they are able to provide a good understanding of the challenges, that at times can arise, when caring for children in care. The ambassadors are also able to offer newly approved carers one to one support during their first two years of fostering.

In addition to the above a monthly support group and a WhatsApp group are also available for any ongoing advice and support purposes.

Monthly support is also available to help support newly approved foster carers to achieve the required training, support and development standard (TSDS).

## **Foster Carer's Handbook**

All foster carers are provided with the Foster Carer's Handbook which provides comprehensive information on all aspects of fostering including information on allowances, training and procedures. When information is updated, foster carers will be sent updated information to insert as a replacement in the handbook.

## **Children's Guide to Fostering**

The Fostering Service has a children's guide to Fostering which provides information about fostering. The child's Social Worker is responsible for giving this to the child and spending time with the child to talk through and explain its content in accordance with the child's age and understanding. The SSW will take a proactive role to ensure this is done.

## **Foster Carer Training/ Continuous professional development (CPD)**

The provision of post approval training is central to maintaining high standards of care by ensuring the personal and professional development of foster carers. Each foster carer has a Personal Development Plan (PDP) completed to assess and identify their learning and development needs.

The foster carer's training manual has a comprehensive menu of training courses and SSW's attend some of the CPD training to support the learning and follow this through in their support work with carers. Carers are required to attend a minimum of four training sessions a year in order to ensure that they provide the highest possible quality care. Foster carers will also be able to take certain courses online, improving the flexibility of the training services we provide.

## **The Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards**

As part of their induction, all Foster Carers are expected to complete the TSD standards by producing a workbook in their first year following approval as foster carers and within 18 months for Family and Friends Foster Carers. The SSW is responsible for assisting the carers in undertaking this work and ensuring that it is completed within the specified timeframe.

## Foster Carer Reviews

Foster Carer reviews are held annually from the date of their original approval.

The SSW is responsible for preparing a full set of paperwork with all the necessary contributions from the stakeholders in a placement. These are then passed to the Fostering Deputy Team Manager for comments. The complete set of paperwork is sent to the foster carers and the reviewing officer at least 5 working days before the review meeting is held.

Wherever possible the Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FIRO) chairs the review meeting and prepares a separate report of the meeting with recommendations which are returned to the Fostering Manager for consideration. For couples who foster it is the expectation that both parties will be present at the review meeting.

The majority of reviews take place in the carer's home. The FIRO does not have any case work responsibilities for Havering and therefore offers a degree of independence; this is the sole remit of their role. Reviews provide an opportunity to positively evaluate progress and practice over the previous year. All stakeholders of the placements within the review year are expected to provide a written contribution for the Foster Carer Review. This forms the essential evidence base to evaluate the care offered to looked after children in the foster home, to provide the necessary safeguarding for looked after children, and quality assurance of these resources.

All initial Foster Carer Reviews are presented to the Fostering Panel for consideration of continued approval and thereafter on a three yearly basis. However, concerns regarding a foster carer's progress or change in circumstances can lead to a review being called at any time. The carer or the Fostering Service can request a review at any time. All foster carers are required to have DBS and other statutory checks and medical reports updated every three years and if applicable have an education check on a carers' school aged child.

## Foster Carer's Allowances

The Fostering Service is responsible for ensuring that Foster Carers are paid the appropriate allowances. Details of the current allowances for Foster Carers are provided to all foster carers and listed in the Foster Carer's Allowance document. These are reviewed annually in accordance with NMS and Foster Carers are consulted if changes are proposed.



# Placements of Children

Placements for children are considered on the basis of first seeking carers from within the child's own network of family and friends (Connected Persons Carers). If that is not possible, a matched placement is then considered using the borough's own fostering resources, unless this is not in a child's interests. If a suitable placement is still not found, then an external resource will be looked for by the Havering Children's Placements team.

The Fostering Service receives requests for foster care from Social Workers once senior managers have approved the child coming into local authority care. The request is provided in writing on a placement referral form and outlines the reasons for placement, the expected outcome, care needs, ethnicity, religion and language and intended timescales, legal status and any other key information that enables a suitable match to be found.

All children will be placed with carers able to meet their needs and will be provided with a bedroom of their own unless they are siblings who have previously shared rooms and where this is suitable to their own needs.

If certain circumstances, when it is in the child's best interest to place them with a carer outside of the carer's approval category and the carers are in agreement with this, a variation or exemption, depending on the requirement will be requested and can be agreed by a designated Senior Manager.

Havering Children's Services are focused on ensuring all children's Placements Plans and matching details are recorded systematically and consistently. All forms will be signed and copied to the relevant staff, parents and carers where appropriate. Copies will be maintained on the Carers file as well as the child's or young person's file.

**At Havering, we are committed to bringing hope and dignity to children moving around the care system by providing them with backpacks, filled with items centred around their needs with the support of Comfort Cases UK.**

## Delegated Authority (DA)

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2010 & 2013 set out the principles of Delegated Authority in Foster Care placements.

A Placement Planning Meeting is held within 5 days of a placement being made and delegated authority will be discussed and managed according to Havering's Delegated Authority policy.

Children's Social Workers are responsible for completing this form in partnership with the Foster Carer, their SSW, the child according to their age and understanding, birth parents and any other relevant stakeholders in the placement.

The SSW will ensure that this written information is given to the Foster Carer along with the Placement Information Record and a copy of the Child's Care Plan.



## Education

The Fostering Service believes that education and training are key elements to all children living successful adult lives. The Fostering Service will aim to keep children within their existing school provision with the aid of transport if required. If this is not possible the Fostering Service and Social Workers will endeavour to find suitable alternatives working closely with Havering Education Service and the Havering Virtual School.

A suitable alternative is considered to be another full time school placement or placement as outlined in any Statement of Educational Needs that may be in existence. The 'Education of Looked After Children' policy outlines in detail the requirements, roles and responsibilities of staff, carers and parents.

Havering has a Virtual Head and team to oversee the educational needs of all children and young people in care placed within and outside of the borough. Havering will also provide support, training and advice to foster carers. Schools will provide all children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP). Carers will be supported to provide extracurricular activities aimed at encouraging educational attainment.

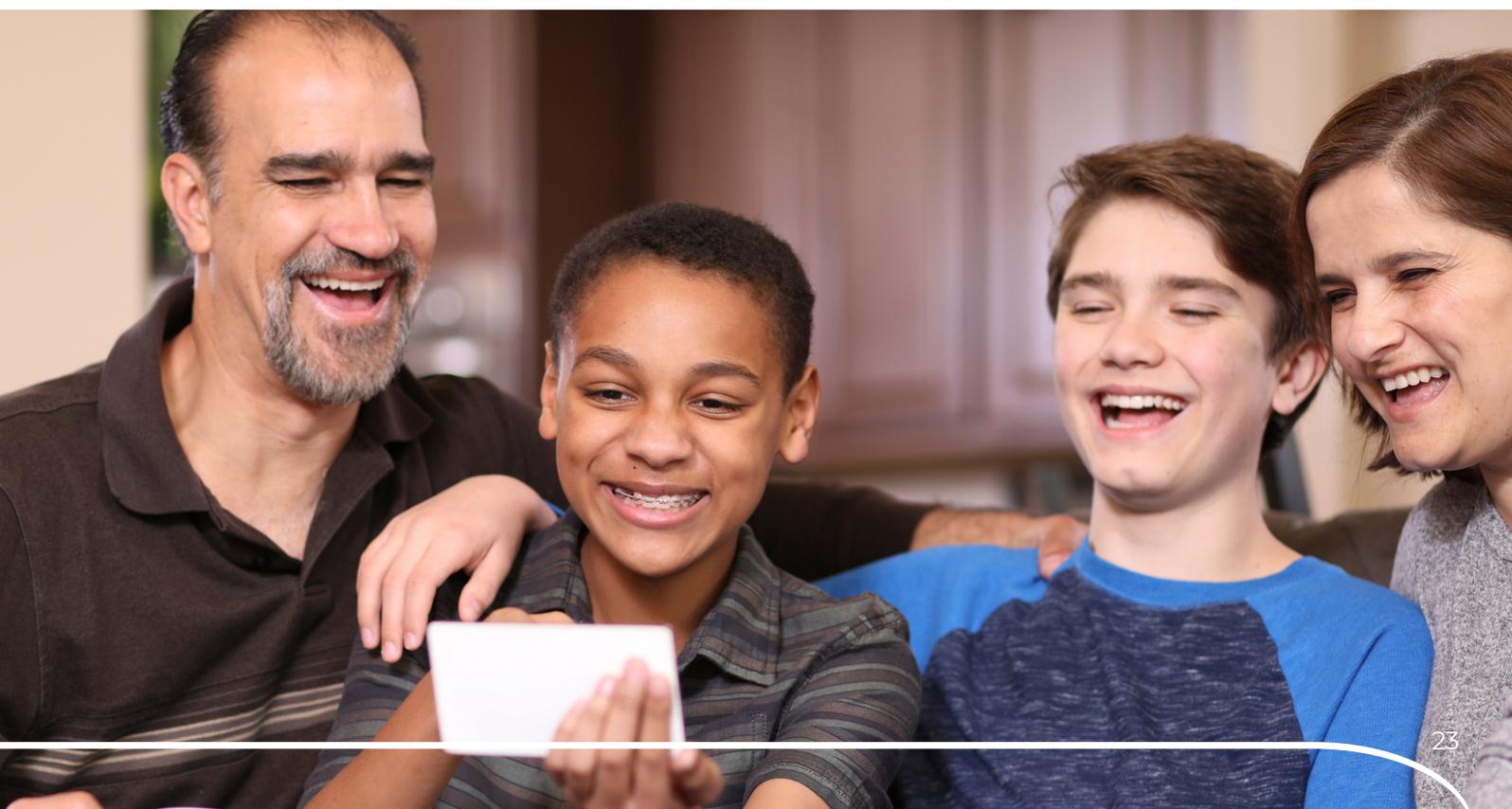
## Therapy and Mental Health Provision

The service has access to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who will provide services to young people with particular mental health needs. A dedicated LAC CAMHS practitioner is available to support children and young people and referrals for this service can be made through the Child's Social Workers in consultation with the Team Around the Looked After Child.

Havering Children's Services in conjunction with our health colleagues will provide, if assessed as necessary, independent therapeutic services to children and young people with particular needs that cannot be met from within its own resources. Foster carers and the Fostering Service will be fully consulted and involved in the setting up of such provision to ensure plans are appropriate and inclusive.

The Fostering Service provides practical support to carers and young people including:

- Practical advice on parenting, safe caring and behaviour management techniques from SSW's, experienced foster carers, therapists or case workers as most appropriate.
- Consultation with our in house systemic family therapists which can include direct work and intervention to focus on particular areas of need.
- Written care plans, delegated authority and placement plans outlining any particular identified need or behaviour management support to be provided.
- Two support groups both held monthly - daytime and evening for Foster Carers and one support group for Connected Persons Carers.
- Small group supervision sessions facilitated by our systemic therapist
- Training and coaching on particular health issues as required or highlighted
- Medical advice regarding any medication needs as required
- Practical support workers or services as identified in care plans to support placements provided by carers.
- Written guidance in the form of policies and procedures covering possible eventualities and actions required and key contact points (Foster Carer Handbook).
- The Looked After Nurse will offer support and advice to foster carers on health issues.



# Storage, Access and Foster Carers Records

The London Borough of Havering's Fostering Service recognises the importance of case records and works to ensure records are kept secure at all times. The Fostering Services adheres to the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the local authority's requirements for the storage of files and information relating to foster carers.

Foster carer files are stored electronically on our secure integrated children's recording system database, supplied by Liquid Logic. Paper files which were used prior to the implementation of the digital system are archived with a specialist company in a secure storage facility. Only the Fostering Service can access and request these files to be removed from the archive.

In accordance with The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 any record relating to a foster parent in the register maintained under regulation 31, is retained for at least 35 years from the date on which their approval is terminated. The records compiled under regulation 30(5) are retained for at least 10 years from the refusal or withdrawal, as the case may be, of the application to become a foster carer. Closed paper files are archived off site but can be retrieved.



# Allegations, Complaints and Comments

## Allegations

All children are entitled to the same level and standard of protection from harm including those receiving services from statutory or other agencies. For this reason, enquiries and investigations relating to children in receipt of such services must be dealt with under the current legislation and London Child Protection Procedures, Child Protection s47 Enquiries Procedure.

Allegations or suspicions that a foster carer has caused harm to a child will be investigated thoroughly, speedily and sensitively under those procedures and will involve open and honest communication with and support to all those affected.

It is important to note that, although there may be insufficient evidence to support a Police prosecution, this does not mean that action cannot be taken to protect a child nor that the termination of a foster carer's approval cannot be considered.

It should also be noted that it may be necessary to consider during an investigation what action, if any, should be taken with regard to other children with whom foster carers against whom allegations are made have contact, including their own children.

All allegations are referred to the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) located in the Safeguarding Service Of Children's Services. In instances when threshold for referral is met, OFSTED are notified about the allegation / incident.

Following an allegation or complaint against foster carers where the LADO threshold is not met, an investigation and Standards of Care report will be completed and presented to the Fostering Panel to ensure scrutiny and for recommendations as to the carer's suitability to continue providing care. In all cases the needs of the children remain paramount. All carers will have access to the Foster Talk advice line for support and will also receive support from their supervising Social Worker. An independent worker can be appointed to support carers through the process of investigation if required.



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the rest**

## Comments, Complaints, Compliments

All Foster Carers are given a copy of the “Comments, Complaints, Compliments” leaflet.

As part of our drive for better services, we want you to let us know when something goes wrong.

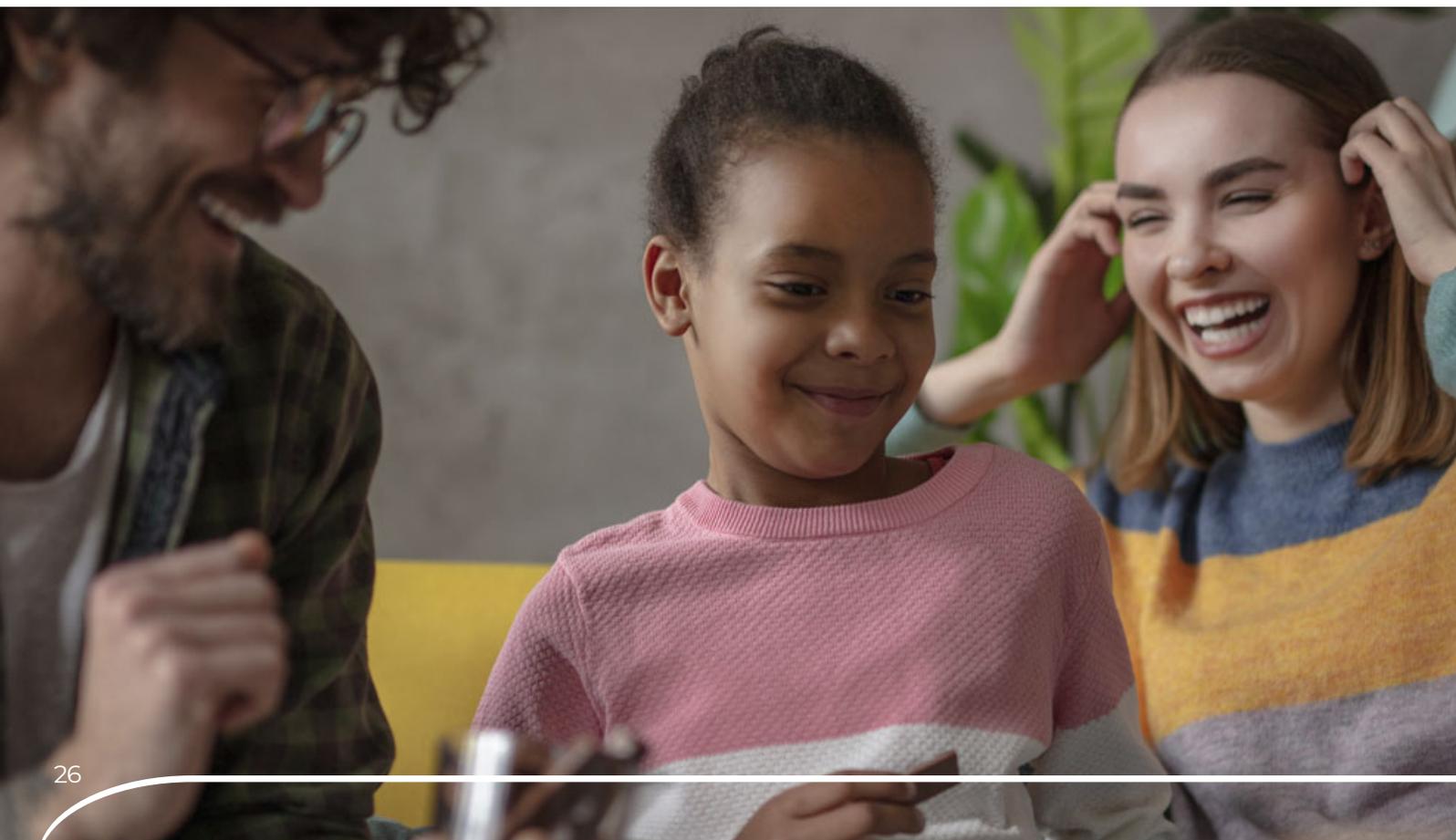
We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our provision of, or failure to provide, a service we have responsibility for and when we have not put right any service failure in a reasonable timescale.

We will deal with your complaint using a three stage complaints procedure.

Comments, compliments and complaints regarding the Fostering Service can be made:

- Online
- By phone to the Designated Complaint Officer on 01708 432 589

For a paper form, or a form in large print, braille or a translated copy please email: [scsi@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:scsi@haverling.gov.uk).



# Appendix A - The Structure of the Service



Service structure is subject to change during 2023-2024 as a result of the current council wider target operating model senior leadership restructure.

The Fostering Service is part of the Children's Services Department that sits within the people strand of Havering Council. (See Appendix A: The Structure of the Service)

Havering is committed to monitoring the quality of its services and the outcomes of placements. We have appointed experienced social work staff with relevant qualifications, who are registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council and have had enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks. They are appointed by interview in accordance with the Fostering regulations and standards, equal opportunities, good practice and the boroughs human resources recruitment policies.

Copies of staff qualifications, registration, references and checks are kept on personnel files. Regular supervision, training and annual personal development and performance appraisals are conducted. (See Appendix B: staff qualifications and experience)

The Head of Service for Children in Care & Support Services is Tendai Dooley; the Assistant Director for Children's Services is currently vacant, the Director of Children's Services, Tara Geere; and the Chief Executive for Havering is Andrew Blake Herbert.

The Fostering Service is supported by skilled and highly experienced individuals who carry out all financial transactions, all adult & children's health assessments, and the distribution of DBS checks to the team. They also deal with all aspects of the fostering panel and are responsible for taking the minutes and distributing Panel Papers each month.

## Appendix B - Qualifications and Experience

The skills, knowledge and experience of the Fostering Service staff are the cornerstone to providing a safe and effective service to children and young people. All staff employed are appropriately trained and qualified, holding Social Work England registrations and DBS certifications. with many staff having significant experience of working in children's social care services. All staff receive monthly supervision and permanent staff are subject to an annual appraisal.

# Registration and Inspection

OFSTED is responsible for having an overview of the Fostering Service. They undertake regular inspections of the Fostering Service and during the inspection seek confidential feedback from service users, carers, and placing Social Workers.

OFSTED are alerted to any significant incidents in the Fostering Service such as child protection investigations or major allegations against carers.

The service is registered with and inspected by Ofsted. Enquiries should be addressed to:

Ofsted  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA 08456 404045  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 1231 (about children services)  
Tel: 0300 123 4666 (complaints about agencies)  
Tel: 0161 618 8524 (minicom / textphone enquiries)

## Contact us

Further information about Fostering in Havering;

Call: 01708 434574  
Email: [fostering@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@haverling.gov.uk)  
Make an enquiry: [Complete form](#)  
Website: [www.haverling.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.haverling.gov.uk/fostering)

Havering's Fostering Service is located;  
Havering Town Hall  
Main Road  
Romford  
RM1 3BD

[www.havering.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.havering.gov.uk/fostering)



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