

Blue Sky

F O S T E R I N G



STATEMENT OF
PURPOSE
2019 - 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate statute law and regulations, including:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services

It aims to provide children, young people, parents, carers, staff and other professionals with information about the agency and the services and facilities we provide, including:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of Blue Sky Fostering.
- Information about the services and facilities provided by Blue Sky Fostering.

A copy of the statement is made available upon request to:

- Ofsted
- Purchasers of the service
- Any person working for or with the fostering service
- Any child (subject to age and understanding) placed with the fostering service
- Any parent or guardian of any child placed with the fostering service

Children and young people are also provided with age appropriate welcome guides which are in more suitable formats for them to understand.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed at least annually by the Senior Management Team.



OUR VISION

“To make a real and measurable difference to the lives of looked after children and young people”

From the outset in 2005 we decided to become large enough to offer security and influence, but small enough to still offer the personal touch and support often missing from larger providers.

At Blue Sky we have a set of values which describe the way in which we want to approach everything we do. They also reflect our promise to everyone who is part of the Blue Sky family.



**Treat others as
you would want
to be treated**

We treat others with kindness and respect, even if we disagree. If we have an issue we deal with it openly, respectfully and sensitively. We will always tread gently with people's feelings.

We recognise that everyone is a unique individual. We will always seek to understand others (and to see the other person's point of view), before we seek to be understood ourselves. We will strive to listen more than we talk.

Whenever we are working with or making decisions that affect the children in our care, our aspirations will always be the same as those for our own children.

**We are one family,
we stand shoulder to
shoulder**



Whatever your role, you are valued for your contribution. We discourage unhealthy competition between colleagues and teams. We are one team and we all work together. We support each other. We take care of each other. We will always strive to provide the opportunity for young people, carers, colleagues and our customers to be the very best they can be.

**We keep
our
promises**



When we say we'll do something or we'll get back to someone, we do it. We do not let people down – colleagues, carers, customers or young people.

**A problem shared
is a problem
solved**



We learn from our mistakes. We do not hide them for fear of blame. We share problems so we can work collaboratively to find solutions. We all take responsibility to share ideas and nurture other people's ideas. We encourage a 'can do' attitude.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Provide a responsive, supportive, professional 24 hour service for foster carers, looked after children and purchasers.
- To deliver foster carer placements that provide looked after children with a stable and consistent experience of a safe, warm and caring family life, to maximise and enhance their potential.
- Promote a child centred approach throughout our practice, having the child's welfare as paramount in all our decisions.
- Ensure careful matching of a child's needs and wishes with the skills and qualities of a foster carer.
- Recruit and retain foster carers from diverse backgrounds ensuring a choice of appropriate placement options for children and young people.
- Ensure the cultural and diversity needs of each child and young person are met.
- Promote the educational achievement of young people enabling them to benefit from a range of educational activities.
- Enable young people to develop social interests, hobbies and take part in a range of activities.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure that every child's emotional and physical health needs are met.
- Promote contact with the birth family & significant others during a placement.

- To ensure that all foster carers have access to timely support, training and guidance from suitably qualified social workers.
- A commitment to on-going learning and professional development of the agency, foster carers and staff.
- A commitment to developing our practice through user consultation and participation.
- To deliver best value at all times.

STATUS AND

CONSTITUTION

Blue Sky Fostering is registered and inspected as a fostering provider under the Care Standards Act 2000 / Fostering Service Regulations 2011, and therefore properly constituted to provide foster care placements for looked after children and young people on behalf of local authorities.

Blue Sky Fostering is an owner managed company which has grown organically over the past 14 years to be a key provider of fostering services across the south of England whilst continuing to maintain a strong family friendly feel.

The Board of Directors are owner-managers and actively involved in the day to day business.

Blue Sky Fostering Board of Directors:

- Simon Lockyer — Chief Executive
- Fiona Lockyer — Director
- Grace Wyatt — Director
- Jason Viant — Company Secretary

The Board of Directors meet regularly and are responsible for the corporate governance of the company, as well as determining and reviewing the following:

- Strategic Vision
- Quality Assurance
- Annual Business Plan
- Financial Management & Performance
- Policies & Procedures
- Legal Compliance
- Culture, Values, Vision & Mission

MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE

The Senior Management Team has responsibility for the strategic direction and day to day management of the organisation. The Senior Management Team consists of the CEO, Director (Responsible Individual), two Director of Operations (one of whom is also the Registered Manager) and a Recruitment Director. The Responsible Individual is a qualified social worker and supervises the Registered Manager.

The Senior Management Team have considerable experience in social work, both within the statutory, charitable and independent sectors. All have worked within the fostering / adoption field for many years in either executive, management, practice or development roles. They hold a range of qualifications including MA, BA, NVQ4, CQSW, Dip SW, BSc, PG Dip and Graduate Diploma in Leadership and Management.

The Senior Management Team meet weekly. The purpose of this team is to provide overall strategic direction for the organisation. This information is then disseminated to the Operational Management Team. The Senior Management Team also attend social work practice meetings and business team meetings on a regular basis. The Senior Management Team also meet as a Safeguarding Board to ensure the safeguarding culture across the organisation follows legislation, policy and practice guidance.

The Safeguarding Board is chaired by the agency Safeguarding Lead (the Registered Manager) or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Director of Operations).

The Operational Management Team is supervised by the two Director of Operations. The Operational Management Team consists of Area Managers, Education Director, TLC Service Manager (who also has responsibility for the Placements Team) and QA Manager. The function of the Operational Management Team is to consider how the focus of the Senior Management direction is embedded into practice / implemented consistently across the organisation.

REGIONAL TEAM

STRUCTURE

We have regional offices as a base for staff and foster carers in the communities we serve. Training and meeting facilities are available within our seven regional offices in Hampshire, Devon, Bristol, Kent, and Brighton. When there is a need to hold training or meetings for foster carers outside of these areas, rooms are hired locally. This means Blue Sky Fostering is able to deliver a local service close to the communities of children and foster carers.

Our IT network allows Social Workers to communicate effortlessly wherever they are based.

In 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2017; Blue Sky Fostering received 'Outstanding' in all judgement areas based on this service delivery model.

OUR SOCIAL WORK

TEAMS

Blue Sky Fostering promotes cohesion and close communication throughout the company. The regional staff teams meet monthly.

Members of Support Services Teams come together quarterly and the whole social work team comes together quarterly for their social work practice meetings. These meetings are an opportunity for the team to develop practice and learning as well as reflecting across the organisation on best practice throughout the agency.

The Registered Manager (Director of Operations) is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency and, alongside the Directors, is responsible for the development of services to children and young people. The Registered Manager is experienced in working in different sectors and has worked for Blue Sky for over 6 years.

The Director of Operations are responsible for the management of the geographical areas, directly managing the Area Managers. They line manage Area Managers who sit in office sites across the agency. The majority of areas also have a Deputy Area Manager, whose role is to coordinate and ensure delivery of TLC services to our foster carers and young people. The Deputy Area Managers are supervised by Area Managers. Senior Practitioners are experienced supervising Social Workers, whose responsibility is to supervise staff, hold a complex caseload and mentor new workers. Each office has a team of Supervising Social Workers and Individual Workers / Social Work Assistants.

Foster care services within each region provide placements for enhanced fostering services and special projects, such as the Therapeutically Led Care Services (TLC); placements with young people with complex needs; parent and child placements, standard placements and Staying Put.

Monitoring and support of educational progress for young people is undertaken by the Director of Education and her team. Foster carers are also provided with guidance and training on education.

Supervising Social Workers are qualified, HCPC registered social workers, having worked in statutory child care, court work, child protection, therapeutic work and fostering/adoption. We also support social workers through their ASYE. Many of the team have further qualifications in psychology, social sciences and social work. Supervising Social Workers each have a geographical area and are responsible for visiting carer households regularly, attending meetings, spending time with children and young people in placement

as appropriate and making recommendations for the annual foster carer review. They each facilitate their own Carer Support Team Meetings.

Social Work Assistants provide specific support to foster carers and young people. Individual Workers work with young people on a 1-2-1 basis providing focused support in a planned way. For example, independence skills, developing and reviewing a particular behaviour management plan for a young person. Individual Workers / Social work Assistants are experienced childcare practitioners. Experience within the team includes teaching, residential social work, youth offending and foster care. Qualifications include NVQ3, psychology and an accredited Triple P (positive parenting program) trainer.

Support Workers are on hand to provide additional and meaningful support to foster carers from day care to 1-2-1 sessions with young people as and when required.

OUR SUPPORT SERVICE

TEAMS

The Responsible Individual is responsible for the overall management of the support services. The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance and for looking at innovative ways of improving the quality of service delivered to young people, foster carers, staff and Local Authorities.

The Director of Recruitment ensures that good quality carers are recruited, assessed, trained and presented to an effective fostering panel. The Recruitment Director is a qualified social worker with many years assessment experience in statutory childcare and fostering. The Panel Co-ordinator is an experienced administrator.

The Participation Manager works directly with young people, foster carers and staff to ensure young people are involved in all stages of participation (young people led participation, agency led participation). The Participation Co-ordinator is also the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Programme Manager with the agency being the first fostering agency to provide this award.

The Training Manager is based centrally and oversees the quality and effectiveness of all carer training.

The Placements Team are responsible for ensuring referrals for placements are responded to efficiently, putting forward good matches to the local authority and ensuring the smooth transition of children into a Blue Sky foster placement when handing over to the social work teams.

Administrative Staff provide support to Blue Sky Fostering staff through ensuring good communication, facilities and administration services. Fostering Advisors manage initial enquiries from prospective foster carers; arrange home visits and are the first point of contact throughout the assessment process.

Marketing Team is responsible for developing and implementing the agency's marketing strategy. Closely working with the Area Manager, the Marketing Manager and Marketing Assistants ensure that the placement needs of the local authorities are met and a steady pipeline of applications from prospective foster carers are received.

The Business Development Manager is the first point of contact for local authorities regarding their placement and contractual needs.

All our staff have received training in child protection, equality & diversity, risk assessment and fostering regulations and are DBS checked.

STANDARDS OF CARE

At Blue Sky Fostering, we believe that every child matters and that the needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount.

Blue Sky Fostering defines the parameters and expectations of our standards throughout all our documents, but in particular our:

- Policy & Procedures Manual
- Foster Carers Undertaking & Fostering Agreement
- Foster Carers Handbook
- Employee Handbook

At Blue Sky Fostering we believe that:

- Each individual has an inherent right to develop their potential, regardless of previous life experiences
- Children & young people have a right to be looked after by adults who offer respect, concern and affection
- Adults need to respect the significance for the child of their birth family, their race, culture and religion
- Children & young people have the right to achieve the best possible outcomes in line with Every Child Matters
- Young people should be suitably prepared for leaving care: leaving their Blue Sky placement with savings, educational attainment to support their chosen career and suitable independent skills
- The agency should be managed ethically, effectively and efficiently
- All staff, foster carers and other adults who come into contact with children through Blue Sky Fostering will be subject to appropriate checks and vetting procedures

In addition, Blue Sky Fostering will:

- Comply with all the relevant legislation and strive to exceed the National Minimum Standards at all times
- Ensure the rights of children are promoted in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child
- Child protection procedures are followed robustly at all times to ensure children and young people are safeguarded
- Work in partnership with the local authority to identify the individual needs of the child and then deliver that care
- Foster carers do not use corporal punishment, are skilled in behavioural management and do not do anything that demeans, degrades or humiliates the young person in their care
- Equality & diversity is promoted at all times, through recruitment, assessment, matching and placement support

SERVICE PROVISION

Blue Sky Fostering aims to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure the provision of a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with foster carers. At Blue Sky Fostering, we believe our role is to offer a complimentary service to Local Authorities to enable the provision of a wide range of safe, secure and appropriate foster care options including:

Standard Fostering Emergency Placements are provided at short notice and supported by a 24 hour emergency response service.

Bridging Placements are a short term, flexible placement, focussing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child into and from the placement.

Short Term Placements can be providing care for a few days, weeks or months while plans are being made for the child's long term future.

Long Term Placements are where foster carers provide permanent care for a child up to and into adult independence where adoption is not an option.

Permanency is promoted and encouraged to offer a stable home for life.

Sibling Placements are placements where siblings are either placed together or separately with us facilitating contact between siblings.

Single Placements have highly experienced carers looking after children and young people who have very complex needs and/or challenging behaviour.

Respite Breaks are where foster carers provide a break for parents and additional support where their own support networks are lacking. This can be an overnight stay or a couple of weeks.

Unaccompanied Children are placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Support packages include immigration; supporting religious, languages and cultural needs; integration with community and faith groups.

Blue Sky Specialist Fostering Parent & Child(ren) Placements provide a safe and supportive placement to a parent & child(ren). Some parent & child(ren) placements can also be an assessment placement where Blue Sky staff and carers assess the parenting capacity.

Blue Sky's Therapeutic Led Care (TLC) service aims to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot manage or thrive at the current time in a standard placement.

Blue Sky wishes to offer a fostering placement to all children and young people including those with more complex needs and also young people who need the support of the TLC services.

The TLC service provides intensive support to both the children and young people and also their carers. The TLC services work with children and young people of all ages. Services are based heavily in trauma recovery, attachment based parenting and behaviour modification. Carers receive intensive training. The TLC service receives consultation from Blue Sky's Clinical Lead and the team also consists of qualified therapists, DDP trained practitioners and experienced and skilled social workers and some staff trained in behaviour modification via the Social Learning Centre in Oregon.

The main aim of the under 12 service is to support the children and young people to make the much needed progress to form secure and trusting attachments with their caregiver in order to begin to view the world differently and to be enabled to accept that their environment can be safe and secure. The main aim of the +12 service is to support and teach the young people throughout an intensive programme to build the skills needed to enable them to keep themselves safe and to be supported to thrive in a lower level, less intense and less structured environment.

Youth Justice Fostering placements are for young people remanded to local authority care.

THE MATCHING PROCESS

“We recognise and respect that every child and young person is a unique individual.”

At Blue Sky Fostering all placements are carefully ‘matched’ to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be best met by the foster carers put forward with their level of skills and experience.

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

At Blue Sky Fostering, we take the decision to place a child very seriously and all decisions to place are overseen by Blue Sky Fostering’s Registered Manager to ensure we have made the best possible match for the child and foster carer.

Children and young people placed with Blue Sky Fostering will never be expected to share a bedroom with another fostered child or child of the foster carer, other than where they are siblings.

SUPPORTING CARERS TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Blue Sky Fostering Supervising Social Workers recognise that despite not having case management responsibility for the child, it is their responsibility to ensure that the needs of the child are paramount.

Monthly supervision meetings take place between the Supervising Social Worker and foster carers, as well as additional support visits. Supervision meetings focus on positive developments for the carers and children, as well as areas of concern. The Supervising Social Worker also has responsibility for assisting the carer in their career development and identifying training and development needs and methods for developing the carer's skills and knowledge.

A record of supervision is provided to the foster carer and placed upon their fostering file immediately following the supervision via the Supervising Social Worker being connected to the agency's system through a virtual network. This ensures that any points for action are immediately recorded and available.

Supervising Social Workers ensure that they regularly see and speak with children and young people alone when visiting the placement.

Team Meetings: Regular Foster Carer Team meetings are held across the Blue Sky Fostering region to enable foster carers to meet and socialise together, share good practice ideas, develop peer support and receive information from the agency. The meetings are attended by Blue Sky staff and regularly attended by Blue Sky senior management.

Emergency Support: Blue Sky Fostering provides a 24/7, 365 days a year on-call service to foster carers staffed by a Blue Sky member of the social work team who has access to the OOH Manager. There is always a senior manager available to the OOH Manager. This team also provide a family placement service for Local Authorities for the placement of children in an emergency.

Annual Review: All foster carers have an annual review to ensure that they continue to be suitable to hold registration and approval as a Foster Carer. The Reviewing Officer, supported by the Blue Sky Business Team, ensures that all statutory requirements are fulfilled and that foster carers have the opportunity to evaluate their practice and development, and to set new goals and action plans for the following year.

Policies & Procedures: Foster carers have access to a comprehensive Fostering Handbook, which is available within the secure area of our website. The handbook contains information, policies and procedures on all aspects of the fostering task and is updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document.

Website: All Blue Sky foster carers have access to a secure section of the Blue Sky website where they can search the Fostering Handbook, obtain information on events, notices and access details of the contact numbers for the 'out of hours' service. Information providing advice and guidance is regularly posted and carers can communicate with staff via submissions. The website is updated daily and so we can ensure that all foster carers are viewing the most up to date policy and practice guidance.

Record Keeping: Foster carers are expected to maintain records of events and information pertaining to the child or young person in placement. Blue Sky provides a pro forma for record taking and carers are able to submit regular recordings. Foster carers also contribute to a monthly report for the Local Authority detailing the progress made by the child or young person in achieving the individual outcomes identified for the child or young person.

Online Forum: Blue Sky foster carers have access to a private forum in where they can share experiences, ideas and advice with other Blue Sky foster carers.

Supporting Children Who Foster: Blue Sky Fostering recognise the significant contribution birth children play in successful placements. Regular events and opportunities are provided for birth children to come together and discuss with agency staff, other birth children, the impact, positive and negatives of sharing their homes and families.

Foster Talk Membership: All Blue Sky Fostering foster carers are entitled to annual membership of Foster Talk. This is paid for by Blue Sky Fostering and gives the foster carers access to advice and guidance including financial and legal advice and insurance.

Finance: All registered Blue Sky Fostering foster carers receive an allowance paid every fortnight during placement. The level of this allowance is dependent on the type of placement and experience of the foster carer. All foster carers are self-employed and as such must pay their own tax and National Insurance which is a nominal amount. Detailed financial guidance alongside details of a specialist accountant to assist with tax issues is provided within the Fostering Handbook. Foster carers are entitled to 2 weeks paid respite, alongside a mileage allowance for excessive mileage taken.

Data Protection: We use a secure encrypted system to send information externally about young people and foster carers. We take Data Protection seriously and have ensured all staff have been given training on this subject area to ensure personal and personal / sensitive information is safe and secure.

Having Fun: At Blue Sky Fostering we recognise that taking care of other people's children is a serious business and can be challenging and at times stressful. Blue Sky Fostering encourages foster carers to come together and socialise. We also organise regular social events where carers can have fun with likeminded people.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Our Supervising Social Workers / Individual Workers speak to the children and young people in a Blue Sky Fostering placement alone at regular intervals. This is of course on top of the placing social workers duty to visit children regularly.

Blue Sky believes if appropriate packages of support are available to foster carers, children and young people are more able to live in a family environment. Blue Sky's service is designed to be flexible and responsive.

The range of services available for children & young people include:

- Assistance to pursue a hobby or interest including holiday activities Individual or group work, including structured activities for children out of school
- Social activities for the sons and daughters of foster carers
- Access to national organisations for looked after children and young people
- Practical assistance with transport or access to external services / facilities
- Supervised contact with families
- Life story or permanency preparation
- Education and therapeutic professionals to provide assistance directly to children or advice to our social workers

Education: Looked After Children have often had disrupted schooling and can sometimes struggle in a school environment. We have an experienced education team who provide practical and emotional support, training and guidance. We have seen a steady increase in educational stability and achievements.

Participation Groups: The voice of the young person and their participation in the continued development of Blue Sky is of central importance. We have a dedicated Participation Manager who is supported to deliver participation by the local teams. Young people devise their own policies, inform us on developments for the agency and engage in young people led participation. Young people write and present their own magazine/newsletter 'The Blue Sky'. This is a place for our young people to demonstrate their talents and includes artwork, poems, stories, jokes and puzzles and highlights any achievements gained. Young people are also involved in the recruitment of both carers and staff.

Young people are also assisting in the continued development of our Staying Put service and learning independence skills. Birth children events are also run to enable birth children to prepare for fostering and share experiences with other children and young people who live in fostering families.

RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & APPROVAL

Blue Sky Fostering is committed to the recruitment of foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people through the provision of high quality care. All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to a rigorous assessment and vetting procedure.

This includes:

- Initial Home Visit
- At least three references
- Previous partner references
- 6 - 8 interviews with applicants and household members
- Medical report
- Identity Checks, Enhanced DBS
- Health & Safety assessments
- A two stage assessment process with mandatory training
- Full Form F assessment

The assessment process takes 4-6 months and every effort is made to ensure there is no avoidable delay. All information obtained is held on file in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations (2011) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Panel: The assessment report is presented to Blue Sky Fostering's independent Panel. The Panel is made up of up to seven members who have a variety of expertise and knowledge including health, advocacy, education, social work, foster care and experience of being in care. The function of the Panel is to provide an independent quality assurance role recommending whether the potential carers presented to them are suitable to become good foster carers.

The final decision for approval is made by the Agency Decision Maker - a senior manager who is social work qualified. If the applicants are

unhappy with the final decision they have a right to appeal. This can be made direct to the agency or direct to the Independent Review Mechanism.

Panels are held in locations across the Blue Sky region.

Foster Care Agreements & Undertaking Foster Carer Agreements are completed following approval, covering a range of contractual information and undertakings including:

- To care appropriately for children & young people in placement, as identified in the foster placement agreement
- To inform Blue Sky Fostering of any relevant significant changes to their household or details
- Follow procedures laid down within the agency's handbook

All foster carers have access to the Fostering Handbook which details:

- Standards of care
- Support & Training
- Complaints & Appeals
- Child protection procedures
- Annual carer review process
- Insurance provision
- Confidentiality procedures
- Behaviour management policy

TRAINING & --- DEVELOPMENT

In order to offer children and young people a high standard of care our foster carers are trained and equipped to meet the demands of the task.

Our training and assessment framework, which incorporates the Training, Support & Development Standard (TSD), exceeds the National Minimum Standards and is underpinned within a framework of equal access to training and learning, anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunity.

Skills to Foster Training

All potential carers attend this two day training as part of their initial assessment, prior to completing their assessment. Subjects covered include:

- Why children come into care
- Promoting sense of identity
- Working in partnership with birth parents and professionals
- Legislative framework
- Child development
- Attachment and loss
- Safe caring
- Awareness of abuse and child protection issues
- Diversity
- Moving on

Carers must also complete a mandatory First Aid Course and at least six practice workshops which include:

- Caring for an abused child
- Getting to know Blue Sky Fostering
- Hellos & Goodbyes Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Contact Issues

Post Approval Induction

Following assessment all foster carers receive a thorough induction. This includes ensuring that carers are clear about policies and procedures including child protection, safe care and health and safety. Induction subjects include:

- Working with Blue Sky Fostering
- Support and Supervision
- Training and Development
- Referral and matching process
- Finances

The First 12 Months & TSD

Within the first 12 months, foster carers are required to complete a workbook in line with the Training Support & Development Standards (TSD).

Blue Sky provides numerous courses (both facilitated in house and externally) to assist foster carers in meeting these standards and developing their skills and knowledge.

After the induction process approved foster carers are invited to start their Level Two core training.

Courses include:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Recording / Data Protection
- Diversity & Discrimination
- De-escalation
- Attachment & Child Development
- Safer Caring including Health & Safety
- Medication

Level Two courses include:

- Digital Families
- Managing Allegations
- Drug & Alcohol Awareness
- Promoting Sexual Health
- Parent & Child Assessments
- CSE & Missing From Care
- Self-harm Awareness
- Caring for a YP who has been sexually abused
- Family Safe Care
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Promoting Identity

Level Three / Four:

- Independent learning / specialist courses
- Foundations of Attachments

STATISTICS

Statistics as of the 1st of April 2019

Blue Sky Fostering had over 220 foster carers approved to take a range of placements aged 0-18 years. This includes foster carers who cater for sibling groups, parent & child, disabilities and children with challenging behaviours requiring our TLC service.

During 2018/19 we continued to increase the pool of available foster carers.

266 children and young people were placed with Blue Sky Fostering approved foster carers. 190 were placed in a 'mainstream provision'; - this includes children in Parent and Child placements and those in a complex needs placements 76 were placed in therapeutic (TLC) placements.

Ethnicity

18% of our young people are black & ethnic minority ethnicity.

Ages

The young people in our care up to April 2019 were aged:

- 0 - 5: 9%
- 6 - 10: 23%
- 11 - 18: 66%
- over 18's and adult parents within P&C placements: 2%

SUCCESS

Blue Sky foster carers survey 2018-2019:

- 95% feel well supported by Blue Sky.

"Always supportive and full of ideas to help with particular foster child."

"Our social worker is always there if we need her and she listens to what we have to say."

"Sensitive to the stresses and strains of being a foster carer."

- 100% of carers feel they benefit from the support of their clinical practitioner.
- 98% feel their child is well supported by their individual worker.
"Very supportive and communication very good, felt like working as a team which is so helpful when dealing with challenging behaviours."
"Has knack of getting through to our young person and helping him."
- 90% of our carers would recommend Blue Sky to others.
"It's like a little family and I'm so proud to foster for BS."
"In all Blue Sky is a great agency for foster children where their young person is put first."

Young people's survey:

- 94% said they felt safe in their foster family.
- 97.5% said they felt part of their foster family.

LA survey:

- 100% placement stability. Local Authority Social Workers (LASW) said we provide placement stability.
- 100% of LASW's said we provide positive outcomes.
- 92% of LASW's would recommend Blue Sky to others
"Foster carers are excellent in meeting the children's needs and very supportive of contact."

COMPLAINTS AND OUTCOMES

Blue Sky Fostering has a comprehensive complaints procedure, which is made widely available in different formats suitable for children, young people, carers, parents and professionals.

Again, Blue Sky Fostering exceeds the National Minimum Standards by commissioning a social worker that is independent from the team / carer to investigate the complaint further, if the complainant continues to be unhappy following the informal problem solving stage.

1% carers had an allegation which met the threshold for formal allegation investigation. In two cases these were substantiated and the carers concerned no longer foster with Blue Sky Fostering.

For a copy of our Complaints Procedure or to make a complaint, please contact the Registered Manager on 01794 590003.

We welcome requests for a copy of this document in Braille, Audio, Large Print and E-text formats. Please phone 01794 590136 to request a copy.

