

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

JANUARY 2026



OFSTED RATED “GOOD” July 2024 URN SC062080



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Following Whispers Family Service Consultancy Ltd. This Statement of Purpose will provide a framework for the way we operate as an Independent Fostering Service.

At Following Whispers, we believe that every child has the right to be safe, supported, and listened to. We believe children and young people should reach their full potential, develop their own identity and experience living in a family environment. As an Independent Fostering Provider, we understand that it is important to have skilled, knowledgeable foster carers at the heart of our service who can support our children and young people.

A 'Children's Guide' booklet is provided to all looked after children and young people who are fostered by Following Whispers, and these are relevant to their age and understanding. These guides are also translated for children and young people who come into care with little or no English. The guide is produced to ensure the wellbeing of children in our placement and clearly outlines how the children/young people access an independent advocate and make direct representations and complaints.

The Statement of Purpose and the service we provide has been developed in accordance with, and reflects appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989.
- The Children Act 2004.
- The Care Standards Act 2000.
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, 2011 (updated 2013).
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.
- The Care Planning and Fostering (England) Regulations 2010.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.

This Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation 3, includes:

- Statement of the Aims and Objectives of Following Whispers Fostering Service.
- Statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

A copy of this Statement of Purpose is available on our website and a copy provided to Ofsted/Chief Inspector. Copies will be provided and/or made available, upon request, to:

- Any person working for Following Whispers Fostering Agency
- Any Foster Carer or prospective Foster Carer
- Any child or young person placed with Following Whispers Fostering Agency
- The parent/person with parental responsibility for a child or young person placed with Following Whispers Fostering Agency
- Any purchasers of the service

This Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by Following Whispers Fostering Agency's Management Team whenever there is a change, and at least annually.

ABOUT FOLLOWING WHISPERS

Following Whispers Family Service Consultancy Ltd was established in 2004 by Paula Henderson, a qualified Social Worker and former Foster Carer. Paula established the agency to primarily offer independent fostering services to local authorities who had insufficient fostering households for children in care. For Paula, the company ethos has always been to offer individualised, person-centred care for children, young people and foster carers in a safe and supportive manner to achieve the very best outcomes for children and young people.

This is a Therapeutic agency, and we have access to male and female therapists for children and young people placed with us on a therapeutic package. Training is commissioned in consultation with our therapists to ensure all foster carers have a therapeutic approach to the care they provide.

We currently provide services to Local Authorities in Kent, Medway, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Cornwall. We are attempting to expand into further areas to recruit more foster carers for the benefit of children in care.

We are part of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) this enables the safe transfer of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in the UK from one local authority (the entry authority from which the unaccompanied child transfers) to another local authority (the receiving authority). Only unaccompanied children that meet the definition of UASC are eligible to be referred to the NTS.

Following Whispers is registered with Ofsted as follows:

Following Whispers Family Service Consultancy Ltd, Investaco House, Unit 14 Invicta Way, Manston Business Park, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5FD.

The Ofsted Chief Inspector is Sir Martyn Oliver, in post since January 2024.

We are accredited by the relevant professional bodies such as Kent County Council placements. Following Whispers is a member of the Fostering Network. All our Foster Carers are individual members of Foster Talk.

We also operate a NACCC Approved Contact Centre (National Association of Child Contact Centres).

Following Whispers is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1989 (Company Registration No – 05180250)

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Following Whispers is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equal opportunities. As an employer we are committed to valuing equality and diversity within our workforce and to treating all employees and applicants equally and we embed these values in our working practices.

We provide equal opportunity and do not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination. The service is responsive to children, young people, staff and Foster Carers' colour, race, sexual orientation, marital status, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and belief systems, recognising their age, understanding, ability and any additional needs they may have arising from physical or intellectual impairment.

As an equal opportunities employer Following Whispers aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity, good relations between people of different races and groups and contribute in any way it can to community cohesion.
- Recognise and value the differences between individuals.
- Wherever possible contribute to the community generally as well as to children and young people in public care collectively and individually.

Our Equalities Policy aims to have the following outcomes:

- Provision of services that are accessible and fit for purpose, especially services provided for looked after children and young people.
- Provision of information about the Agency's services which is accessible and easy to understand.
- To ensure that no child/young person, Foster Carer or member of staff receives less favourable treatment.

PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

Following Whispers values feedback from children, young people and Foster Carers.

Supervising Social Workers are expected to regularly talk to birth children and foster children during visits to obtain their views about their care. We also seek regular feedback from children and young people to shape and develop our service through questionnaires, newsletters and support groups. Monthly feedback forms are completed for all children, whether they are birth children or foster children.

Foster Carers are also consulted on their views during supervision visits, support groups and questionnaires.

Following Whispers Participation Pledge:

- Make sure that everyone who works at Following Whispers understands that they must be proactive in engaging children in participation.
- Listen to, respect and taken children's views seriously.
- Not discriminate against children in any way and to treat them as individuals.
- Continue to strive to build meaningful participation into our values, structures and procedures. We would like children to tell us if they feel we can improve on what we do.
- Make sure that our Participation Policy is available to all young people and their Social Workers, Following Whispers families and staff.

- Let children know about things happening at Following Whispers that affect them, how they can be involved in making decisions and what changes will be made based on what they have said.
- Be honest with children about what can and cannot happen and make sure that they understand why.
- Promote and champion children rights to have their say and make sure their views are taken seriously.

SAFEGUARDING

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part and have a child-centred approach; for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.'

- Following Whispers prides itself on being child focussed, we strive to reflect, learn and develop our practice in a way that safeguarding is at the centre, using Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formerly known as Serious Case Reviews) as a tool for learning.
- Staff are encouraged to 'think the unthinkable'; to be respectful yet challenging of carers, the local authority, and the organisation itself.
- We listen to and encourage children and young people in participation events as a way of engaging and developing relationships with those children within the agency.
- On placement all children/young people are given a children's guide which provides them with information about who they can talk to or how they make a complaint.
- Foster Carers are given clear guidance around safe care and alongside their own family safe care plan, a safe care plan specific to the child/young person placed is created.
- Risk assessments are completed at the point of placement and updated at least six monthly or following any significant incident to reflect changes. The purpose of the risk assessment is not just to highlight risk but to identify what children/young people, carers and staff can do to address, manage and decrease the presenting risks.
- The Registered Manager ensures all Schedule 7 events and notifications are reported and managed in line with relevant legislation and company policy.
- Staff and carers receive mandatory training on safeguarding. Team meetings are used to reflect on any current and relevant situations regarding safeguarding and/or risk, and discussed accordingly.

- Regular case discussions are held by the team to reflect on placement stability and any additional support needs for children or carers. Foster carers receive weekly communication from the agency. We also have a 24/7 out of hours service to pick up any safeguarding issues.



AIMS & OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF CARE

At Following Whispers, we believe that every child has the right to be safe, protected, supported and listened to. We believe children and young people should reach their full potential, develop their own identity and experience living in a positive family environment. We strive to enable children and young people to have choices, promoting empowerment, self-esteem and confidence which improves outcomes.

The aims and objectives of the agency are:

- To provide a high-quality service for looked after children and young people of all ages whose needs have been assessed by the responsible Local Authority as being best met in a foster care setting.
- To ensure children and young people are placed with carers who have been recruited, assessed, approved and reviewed in accordance with statutory regulation and national standards and guidance.
- To support, supervise and provide on-going training to carers so that they can provide a quality service that addresses the physical, emotional, educational and health needs of the children and young people in their care.
- To continually develop and improve our service and not to compromise standards. To this aim we seek internal and external evaluation and feedback on our service.

Objectives:

- To ensure the provision of high-quality care to children and young people in a safe, healthy and nurturing family environment
- To meet the child's individual needs and promote their best interests, in accordance with their care plan
- To provide 24-hour support for carers, children and young people
- To protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation

- To value diversity and promote equality, by recognising the importance of a child's ethnic origin, religion and cultural background; and to consider a child's gender, sexuality and any disability they may have
- To recognise and develop the child's sense of identity and self-worth
- To promote the child's health and wellbeing, including their physical and emotional welfare
- To promote educational achievement and attainment
- To promote and support agreed family time (sometimes called contact) with the child's family and friends, in accordance with their care plan.
- To prepare the child for adult life through the development of relevant life skills.
- To seek the views and opinions of children and promote participation; this occurs monthly.
- To recruit individuals and families from different aspects of the community, in turn offering local authorities a range of placements, reflecting a variety of children's needs
- To achieve consistently high standards when recruiting and assessing carers
- To have an independent Fostering Panel to consider assessments, make recommendations to the agency regarding the award, review or termination of approvals. We also have two people with lived care experience who sit on the Panel.
- To ensure consistency and continuity in the supervision, support and guidance to foster carers
- To provide accessible training that enables carers to develop their skills and knowledge to better meet the needs of children in their care. A psychotherapist provides Therapeutic Parenting training through the PACE model to carers and staff.
- To offer placements that carefully match the specific needs of the child to the carer's skills and experience
- To regularly review the stability of placements to ensure care provided to children remains positive and consistent to minimise the potential for placement breakdown, monthly and more frequently if required.
- To be a responsible employer in recruiting and employing an adequate number of appropriately experienced and qualified staff, who meet the needs of carers and children placed with them
- To ensure the agency is organisationally appropriate and properly structured
- To have procedures in place to control and supervise agency activity
- To have arrangements in place to control and supervise the agency's finances, based on sound financial principles and recognised good practice
- To maintain the skill and knowledge base of independent staff, managers and panel members by providing effective training and staff development programmes
- To monitor and review agency policies, procedures and practice on a regular basis
- To implement administrative procedures and practices so that management and staff can practice their duties in an efficient and effective manner
- To maintain secure, separate and accurate records on children, carers and staff and ensure access to such records, in line with relevant legislation



STANDARDS OF CARE

Following Whispers is a forward thinking, progressive organisation and we implement the national minimum standards for foster carers. All relevant policies and procedures are written and subsequently monitored and reviewed with reference to the framework of expectations laid down by government in regulations, guidance and standards.

Following Whispers sets out to be compliant with fostering regulations and to meet the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.

Following Whispers' achievements and ability to meet all minimum standards and to develop its services further are reviewed regularly by Ofsted and commissioning Local Authorities. This is evidenced in our inspection reports which can be downloaded from the Ofsted website. Our last Inspection was held 1st-5th July 2024 and the grading we received was 'Good'.

Ofsted's Chief Inspector is Sir Martyn Oliver, in post since January 2024.

Our foster carers receive monthly supervisory visits along with at least two unannounced visit a year. Supervising Social Workers keep in contact with their families weekly and visit more frequently if required. Regular progress reports are sent to the placing authority sharing the progress of the child/young person. All carers must meet the competencies set out by the TSDS within twelve months of approval and will be supported by their supervising social worker and a comprehensive training programme to achieve this.

Foster carers will undergo a yearly review to assess their competencies and commitment to the fostering. Carers have the opportunity to provide feedback on the services we offer to them. At this point we also receive feedback from the children/young people in foster care, birth children, Supervising Social Worker, LA social worker and education. The outcome of the reviews is to consider continued approval and the appropriate terms for this.

The supervising social worker role is primarily for the foster carer; however, they will also spend time with the looked after child listening to them and ensuring they understand any decisions that may have been made for them. A monthly contact visit will take place with the looked after child and they will be asked to complete a questionnaire or give their feedback in a way that is appropriate for them. This relationship building is essential to

maintaining placements and enhances the carers' ability to provide a good standard of parenting.

SUPPORTING FOSTER CARERS

Following Whispers has various measures in place to support Foster Carers as they carry out the fostering task:

Supervision

Supervising Social Workers conduct Formal Supervision Home Visits at least every 4 weeks to each foster family or more frequently if required.

Support

Regular weekly phone calls from the office to check the progress of the placement and provide any advice or support required.

Following Whispers registers all its Foster Carers as members of The Fostering Network. The Fostering Network offers advice and support for Foster Carers and has up to date research and information around the Fostering Agenda.

Following Whispers can provide and arrange limited day care. Up to 23 nights planned break/respite per year is available for all our foster families.

Regular training sessions throughout the year are planned to build on and advance the skills and knowledge of the Foster Carers. Foster Carers are also asked to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) Workbooks within their first year of fostering to help them demonstrate their competencies as Foster Carers.

Monthly Foster Carer Support Groups take place in 2 locations.

24 Hour Support

We provide on-call 24-hour support, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This includes telephone advice and support from the office as well as our out of hours (OOH) service. On top of this service, we also operate a back-up support service where members of the Management team remain on-call should they be required to assist the OOH workers.

Annual Reviews

A review of foster carers' approval must take place not more than a year after approval, and thereafter whenever the fostering service provider considers it necessary, but at intervals of not more than a year. Fostering regulations make it clear that the first review report must go back to panel. After that, there is no legal requirement for a review to go back to panel, although the fostering service can choose to do so. Following Whispers have decided that Foster Carers will go back to panel at least five yearly.

The review will consider whether a foster carer's approval should continue and if there should be any changes to their terms of approval.

Form F Assessments of Foster Carers

Form Fs will be updated every 5 years to ensure all information held on the Foster Carers is up to date.

Policies and Procedures

Foster Carers have access to all agency Policies and Procedures. These are also available on CHARMS. Our Policies are updated regularly to ensure the information remains relevant and a copy of the updated version is given to the Carers and updated on the system. Foster Carers and staff have access to the agency Policies and Procedures.

Record Keeping

Foster Carers are expected to maintain records of any information or events relating to the child in placement. Carers have access to the CHARMS system where these records can be recorded. These will be checked and signed off by their allocated Supervising Social Worker.

Birth Children Support

At Following Whispers, we believe that supporting birth children is essential to supporting fostering families. Birth children have access to 24-hour support by telephone and through our open-door policy where they can talk to staff. Each birth child is given a copy of our Children's Guide. Following Whispers also offers activities specifically for birth children which provides an additional source of support.

Activities

A programme of activities and days out are run throughout the year aimed at providing a choice of activities that cater for the needs of all the Foster Carers and Young People within our agency. This is an opportunity for children in the agency to develop their social skills and create happy childhood memories.

Support Groups

We hold monthly Foster Carer Support Group Meetings in 2 different locations so that all Foster Carers living in different areas can access these. Fostering staff will facilitate these meetings and the Managing Director will attend so that Foster Carers have an opportunity to discuss matters face to face with them.

Financial

A monthly fee is paid to all our Foster Carers which comprises of three elements: a carer reward element, personal allowance of the child and maintenance for the child. Foster carers should evidence all monies in the Child's personal allowance. All Carers are self-employed and as such will need to pay their own Tax and National Insurance. Foster Carers are also advised to have their own accountants.

SUPPORTING FOSTER CHILDREN

Children placed with Following Whispers are seen regularly. This can happen in the home or at the offices. During visits we can provide time for the child/young person to talk to a Supervising Social Worker or Family Support Worker privately about their experiences within their foster home. Children and young people are provided with a Children's Guide to the service which is produced in various formats in line with the different age groups and different communication needs of each child.

Events/Activities

A programme of activities and days out are run throughout the year, aimed at providing a choice of activities that cater for the needs of all the Foster Carers and Young People within our agency. Additional specific activities can be considered in-line with Care Plans.

Support Groups

The young people involved in the agency both as looked after children and birth children within foster families have their activities which allow them an informal setting to support them in the fostering experience.

Training

Where appropriate we provide training sessions to the young people on topics relevant to them. This is delivered in a format that they can understand and be involved in. After training they are taken out for lunch as a group.

Advocacy

Every child or young person in foster care has the right to advocacy from someone independent, to help them express their views or make a complaint. Having access to a Children's Rights officer or Advocate is the right of anyone in care and neither a foster carer nor young person should feel that they will get into trouble if they ask for an advocate to help them express their views.

We can liaise with the young person's Social Worker and advocacy agencies if appropriate.



SERVICES PROVIDED BY FOLLOWING WHISPERS

Following Whispers prides itself on finding the closest possible match, when children and young people need to be placed in foster care, and identifying any additional training, support or resources required. We work in partnership with Local Authorities and all other agencies to achieve the best possible outcome for all children and young people who need to be looked after within the agency.

Long Term Placements

Long-Term fostering means that a child or young person lives with a committed Foster Carer until they reach adulthood. Being brought up by one fostering household, often over several years, gives young people in foster care more consistency, and a greater sense of belonging within a family. It also helps them to settle within a local community and develop positive relationships.

Short Term Placements

Short Term foster placements are for children and young people who need to be looked after temporarily. It is the most common type of fostering placement, and it gives Foster Carers the opportunity to really make a difference during a time of change in a young person's life.

Planned Break Respite Placements

We provide respite for our in-house placements which are for specified periods of time. This can be an overnight stay, a weekend, or a couple of weeks. We can also offer this service to Local Authorities who are seeking planned breaks.

Emergency Placements

These are provided at short notice and are supported by a 24-hour response service. These placements can become short term or longer-term placements.

Sibling Placements

We can facilitate sibling group placements, ensuring siblings can be kept together.

NTS (UASC) Placements

Short term foster placements are provided for UASC children. These placements are short term and may last 24 hours or 2 weeks, sometimes longer.

Bridging Placements

Are a short term, flexible placement, focussing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child/young people into and from a placement.

Permanency

Permanency aims to provide security for a child through to adulthood, as all children and young people benefit from living in a predictable and stable environment with as much certainty as possible. A permanent foster placement provides a child with a fundamental commitment from the carers to the child for the rest of their childhood.

Staying Put Arrangements:

From the age of eighteen young people are no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after' and therefore fostering arrangements and legislation relating to children placed with foster carers no longer applies. In circumstances where a young person remains with their former foster carer(s) after their eighteenth birthday, the arrangement should therefore be deemed an 'age eighteen and older arrangement' or "Staying Put" arrangement. Once the child reaches the age of eighteen and legal adulthood, the local authority is no longer making a placement, but facilitating a "Staying Put" arrangement for the young person.

Specialist Fostering

Specialised Disability Placements

Children with learning difficulties as well as physical disabilities need that little bit more care and attention at home. The home should meet the physical needs of the placement and extra support is available from care workers depending on the level of need. The agency would support carers to attend any specialist medical training required to meet the child's needs.

Parent and Child

Parent and child placements are a specialist type of fostering where a parent or parents comes to stay with you at a time when they need extra support. The aim of the placement is to provide support and guidance to the parent so that they may eventually provide independent care for their child. We are not currently able to offer this service.

Integrated Therapeutic Placements:

Therapeutic fostering is a specialist type of foster care that is tailored to support children and young people who have dealt with trauma, abuse or any other kind of severe disruption prior to being placed into foster care. These children may have trouble forming meaningful and trusting relationships with other people or have other behavioural or emotional issues. The agency provides specific training for carers and packages of care that include supporting children's education, behavioural and safety needs. Additional support is provided by our Family Support Workers, Therapist and Trainer.

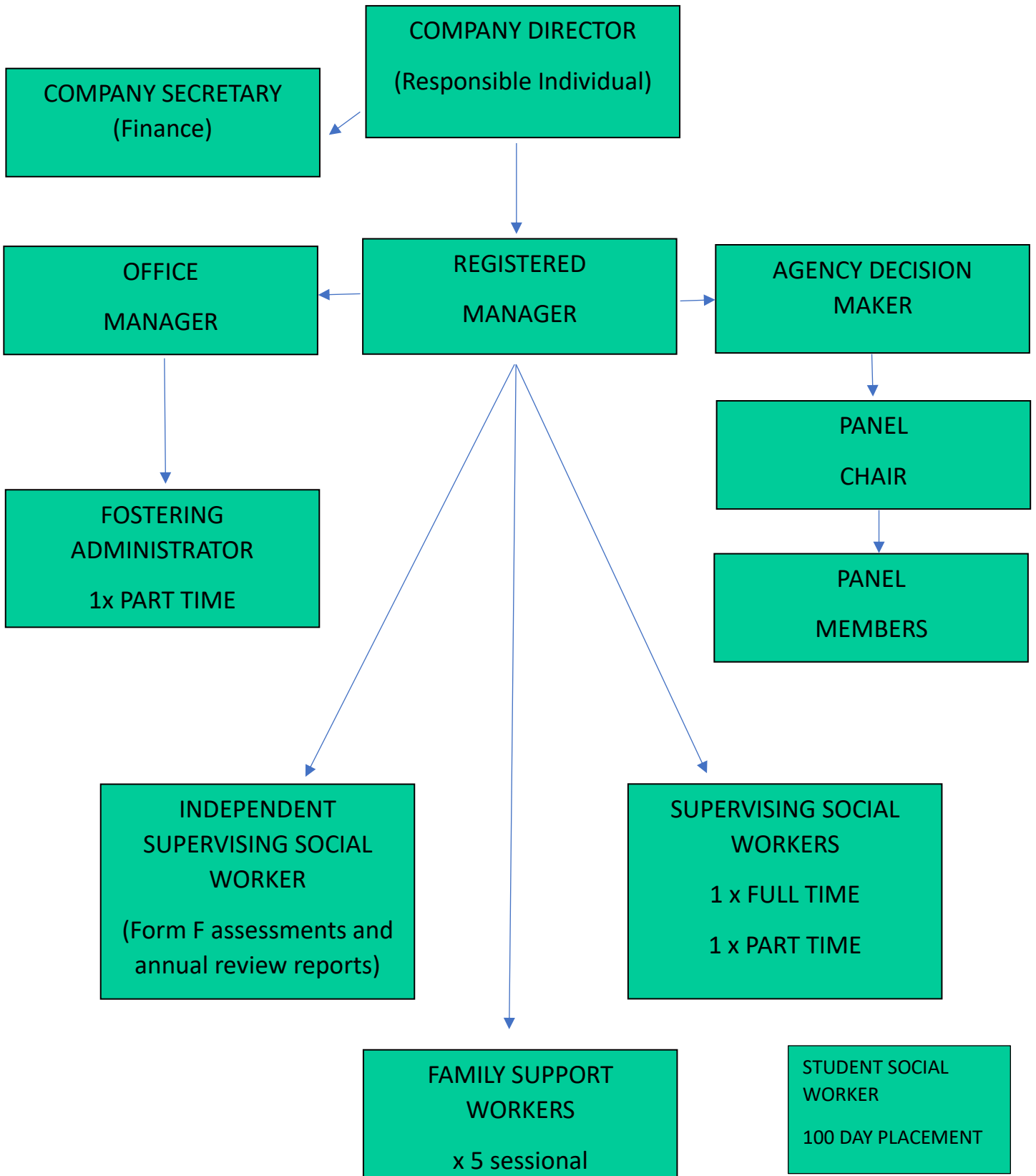
Contact Service

We have a NACCC Approved Contact Centre (National Association of Child Contact Centres). We facilitate and supervise contact sessions with the birth family if requested by the Local Authority, as part of the Care Plan for the young person. We will provide the support for family work to help develop and build bridges between the child or young person and their birth family.

We provide Contact Supervisors and venues for family contact sessions for children placed within our own Fostering Agency as well as outside agencies such as Local Authorities, CAFCASS and local solicitors seeking this service.

We have three family time rooms available at our contact centre and one at our main office which provide a comfortable, controlled venue, equipped with sofas, toys, games, craft activities, DVDs and toilet and kitchen facilities. These provide space for family time to be closely supervised.

COMPANY STRUCTURE



FOSTERING PANEL

In accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Following Whispers Fostering Agency maintains a central list of people suitable to sit on our fostering panel.

They come from different backgrounds such as Education, Health, and Social Care. Members also include Foster Carers, an employee of the Agency and those who have had previous experience of being Looked After. The Fostering Panel has access to medical and legal advice.

The Fostering Panel provides an independent overview and makes recommendations to the Agency on matters that are presented to them. It is child-focussed and aims to ensure that any new foster carers that the Agency recruit will keep children and young people safe.

The Fostering Panel has important functions:

- To recommend to the Agency whether applicants are suitable to be approved as foster carers.
- To recommend any changes to a foster carer's approval
- To discuss any serious concerns about a foster carer's practice
- To recommend termination of a foster carer's approval

The Fostering Panel members will consider the application to see if it meets the Agency's fostering requirements and National Minimum Standards. The Panel will then make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Applicants will be informed in writing of this decision. If they have been unsuccessful, they will be advised that they may (within 28 days) request that the agency review this decision or seek a review of this determination by the Independent Reviewing Mechanism.

Successful applicants will be informed in writing and allocated a supervising social worker. Once approved, foster carers will receive an induction that outlines expectations, policies & procedures and remuneration.

Applicants are not required to meet with the Agency Decision Maker



RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF FOSTER CARERS

Following Whispers makes use of the competencies approach in all stages of the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers.

We endorse the view expressed in the Fostering Network Code of Practice that the use of common, standard assessment tools, such as those produced by the Fostering Network and the CoramBAAF Form F, will enable fostering services to achieve uniform standards. We make full use of the above tools in the recruitment, assessment and approval stages of fostering applications to Following Whispers.

We seek to actively promote the Fostering Network values underpinning the competencies approach and to ensure that they are an integral part of the assessment process. These are:

- Child safety is paramount.
- Individuals are respected.
- Difference and diversity is valued.
- Equality is promoted.
- Discrimination is challenged.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Advice and feedback are provided in a constructive way.
- Applicants are supported to demonstrate their competence.
- Standards of childcare are explicit and agreed.

Following Whispers understands that caring for children can be a demanding task and is committed to ensuring that we have carers who can meet the needs of our children through providing good quality care. All prospective carers are rigorously assessed and vetted by the agency to ensure that we approve suitable carers for our children and young people.

Skills to Foster Training Course:

As part of the assessment process applicants will need to attend 'Skills to Foster' which is a course of 6 sessions designed to give prospective Foster Carers an opportunity to gain an insight into fostering, highlight the work and tasks involved and explore the needs of children in care. The Skills to Foster course forms part of the assessment process for prospective Foster Carers; completion of the course is therefore compulsory. In the case of couples, it is expected that both applicants complete the course.

Skills to Foster Session 7 is a course for children at the proposed fostering family, this would include birth children, grandchildren as appropriate.

This course can be started at any time during Stage One or Two.

Stage One:

Initial Enquiry: When a potential applicant makes contact a first response questionnaire is completed asking a few key questions which will help us decide if the potential applicant is suitable.

Initial Visit: If the above is satisfactorily completed, the Managing Director will undertake an Initial Visit to the potential carer at their home.

Application: If the decision is made to proceed, an application pack will be sent to the applicant. Once that application has been received the process will continue.

Checks: An Enhanced DBS check will be undertaken on the applicant and any other members of the household. Local Authority checks, school checks and financial checks will be completed.

A minimum of three personal references must be obtained from adults for each applicant, and they must have known the applicant for at least two years.

All applicants must agree to a written report being obtained from their GP on their health, and any other relevant health issues.

Once all this information is received and completed, the agency will decide whether to move on to Stage Two.

Stage Two:

Assessment Interviews: A Form F Assessor will be allocated and will arrange a number of visits to complete the Form F assessment. This will involve seeing members of the household together and individually. Once the report is completed it will be shared with the applicants for agreement before being processed and sent to the Agency Panel.

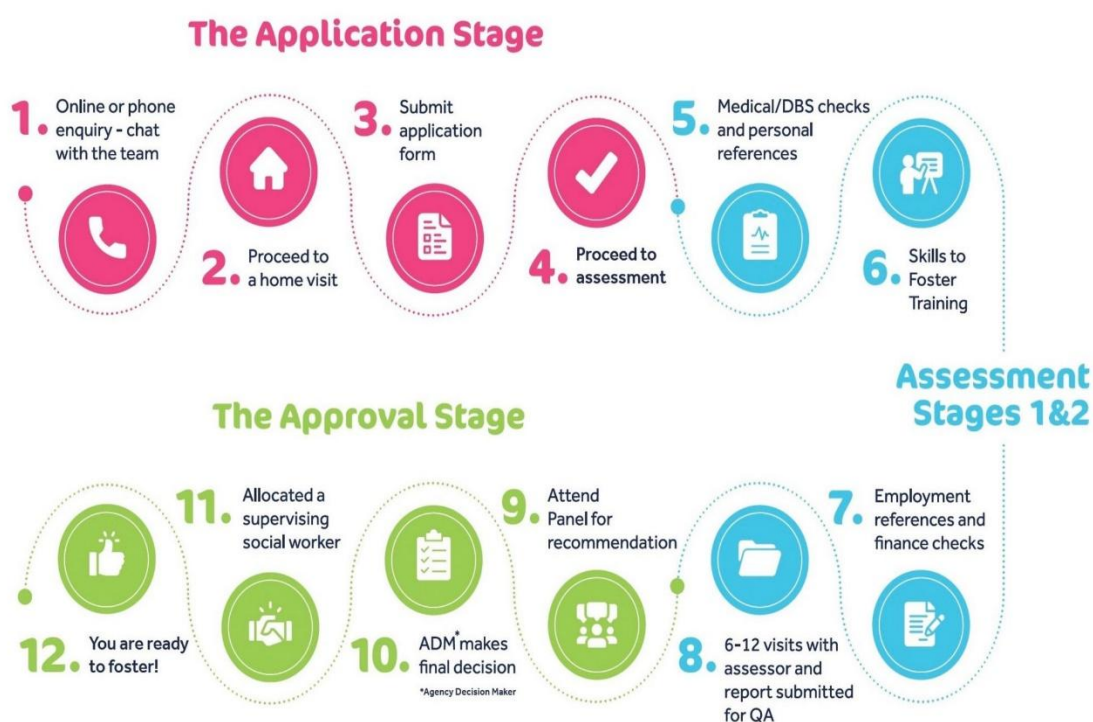
Panel Recommendation: A panel of people (Independent Fostering Panel) must consider the application and the assessment report and make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker as to the suitability of the applicants for approval.

After Approval: Where an application is approved, each foster family will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker. The allocated Supervising Social Worker will provide support to the Foster Carer up to, during, and after all placements.

Depending on circumstances Stage One and Stage Two of the process can be completed concurrently.

Should the applicants be unsuccessful, they will be advised that they may (within 28 days) request that the agency review this decision or seek a review of this determination by the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM).

Please see an overview of the application process (from enquiry to approval) for foster carers. Further details are available by emailing Following Whispers at admin@foster-care.org



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

At Following Whispers, we believe in providing children and young people with the highest standards of care. Our carers are given training to enhance their learning and development and equip them with the skills and knowledge to manage a range of diverse needs. We have internal and external trainers, and we regularly use Foster Carer feedback from training sessions to develop and improve our training provision.

Training Support & Development Standards (TSD): within the first 12 months of being approved as a Foster Carer, all carers are required to complete workbooks to meet the TSD standards. This is started during the Skills to Foster Course enabling us to give a high level of support to new carers. Following Whispers also provide a range of continuous development learning resources to support and enable Foster Carers' TSD Award achievement

Mandatory training: this is a series of ongoing training courses that are mandatory for our Foster Carers to attend.

Online Training: is available for second carers and is offered in addition to the mandatory training undertaking at the training centre.

Records will be kept of the training provided and attended by carers.

The Supervision, Appraisal and Annual Review processes will be used to identify training needs and areas of development. Training provision will be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that it is of the highest possible standard and appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

COMPLAINTS AND OUTCOMES

Following Whispers have a comprehensive complaints procedure, which is made widely available in different formats suitable for children, young people, carers, parents and professionals.

If we were to receive a complaint, we will deal with your complaint quickly. If you ring us, we will acknowledge your complaint within 24 hours to take the details. We aim to provide a full reply within 10 working days. If this is not possible, we will keep you up to date with our progress.

For a copy of our Complaints Procedure or to make a complaint, please contact the Registered Manager or Company Director on 01843 263461.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you require any further information to that enclosed in our Statement of Purpose, please contact us and one of our team will be more than happy to assist in your request.

You can contact us by phone on 01843 263461.

Email: admin@foster-care.org

Or write to: Following Whispers, Investaco House, Unit 14, Invicta Way, Manston Business Park, Ramsgate CT125FD.