



# Statement of Purpose and Function

Lorimer Fostering  
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# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & FUNCTION · LORIMER FOSTERING

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Lorimer Fostering Statement of Purpose has been drawn up to fulfil the requirements and principles contained within the following legislation and guidance:

- The Fostering Service Regulations 2011
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering (NMS) 2011
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review 2010

\*the above list is not exhaustive, but represents the key aspects of legislation, good practice and expected standards.

## 2. LORIMER FOSTERING · WHO ARE WE?

Lorimer Fostering provides high quality family placements to children and young people who are unable to live with their birth family. We operate in the Northwest of England and have Foster Carers throughout the area. Most placements within the fostering service are planned admissions, with particular attention paid to appropriate matching, along with educational and contact issues. Foster Carers are well supported by a team of experienced Supervising Social Workers. The primary focus of Lorimer Fostering is the welfare, safety and wellbeing of the placed child.

## 3. STATUS AND CONSTITUTION

Lorimer Fostering is an independent, family-owned and run fostering service and has been operating since 2004.

Dr Jonathan Khan is the Managing Director and owner of the organisation. The agency is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (company number 04967352 - Lorimer Foster Services), with Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The agency is registered and inspected by Ofsted.

Lorimer Fostering is currently rated as a 'Good' provider by Ofsted.

#### 4. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE, STAFF NUMBERS & QUALIFICATIONS

Staff Supervision Structure  
SOP Version 31 Mar 2022



**Dr JONATHAN KHAN**, as the Managing Director, is the Responsible Individual and has ultimate responsibility for the agency.

Jonathan's background is as a medical doctor (Orthopaedics, A&E & Paediatrics) alongside 20 years of setting up and operating a number of high-quality children's services. He has also undertaken extensive training in several fields including business (MBA), psychology, philosophy (both at postgraduate level at Manchester University) and logical frameworks. In addition, he has undertaken courses in a wide range of fields from Health & Safety, Web Site Design and Optimisation to Electrical PAT testing through to the Psychology of Workplace Actions & Decisions. This broad spectrum of skills allows Jonathan to tackle issues and problems with a large set of tools from a wide range of disciplines.

**ASHLEY HIGGINS** qualified as a Social Worker in 2000 and had extensive experience of working in and managing children's residential services, particularly in challenging settings, working for St Helens MBC between 1992-2004, prior to joining Lorimer as a Residential Service Manager. Ashley sat on the Lorimer Fostering Panel for 2 years prior to becoming the Registered Manager in January 2009. Having fulfilled the role of Registered Manager for over 13 years Ashley has a thorough understanding and knowledge of the relevant legislation and good practice regarding fostering

As part of his role in the agency Ash is also the sole Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for Lorimer, and as such is responsible for all foster carer approvals.

In addition to the Diploma in Social Work, Ashley also has a Graduate Certificate in Management from Salford University, and has attended numerous other training courses.

**RACHAEL KHAN** is a director and is responsible for the financial administration of Lorimer Fostering. Rachael has a significant role in the enquiry stage in developing the relationship with applicants. Having worked previously in customer

service and as a qualified teacher (having attained a first-class degree in the field), she aims to develop good working relationships with foster care enquirers and applicants from the point of initial contact through to Form F assessment.

Lorimer Fostering benefits from a strong, stable staff team, many of whom have been with the company for 10 plus years including a **TEAM MANAGER, SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKERS, MARKETING OFFICER, ADMINISTRATORS, PLACEMENTS MANAGER** and **SUPPORT WORKER(S)**.

## 5. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To provide good outcomes for all children and young people placed with Lorimer Fostering
- To provide looked after children and young people with foster placements that are safe, warm and nurturing
- To ensure that placed children and young people are given every support they need to take full advantage of their educational opportunities
- To ensure that placed children and young people are provided with the means and the support to be healthy
- To ensure that placed children and young people are well supported to move on to independence or to a permanent placement
- To ensure that the foster care assessment is safe, thorough and completed in a timely fashion
- To ensure that foster carers receive good quality, appropriate supervision, challenge and support in the fostering task
- To ensure that foster carers receive regular high-quality training that assists them in the fostering task
- To develop a service that is appropriately responsive to the expressed needs of carers and provides opportunities for consultation in relation to development

## 6. SERVICE PRINCIPLES and ETHOS

Inclusivity is a value at the heart of Lorimer Fostering.

Service delivery is underpinned by a strong family ethos and strives to offer equality and inclusion in everything we do.

Lorimer Fostering aims to provide equality of opportunity to everyone and will recognise and respect differences in people.

We will ensure fairness and equality in supporting under-represented groups and individuals through targeted, supplementary activities that ensure everyone, especially our children and young people, are given opportunities to succeed and thrive.

The service is underpinned by the following principles:

- Lorimer has a duty to placed children, young people and their families and foster carers to make sure that all aspects of the service are as safe as possible
- All placed children and young people have the right to form secure attachments within a warm, nurturing and respectful fostering household

- All placed children and young people should have the opportunity to achieve to their fullest potential, and the role of the foster carer and the fostering service is critical within this
- Everyone has the right to say if they are not happy with arrangements, and to be listened to, and taken seriously
- The needs and welfare of placed children and young people are paramount and will be the primary consideration of the agency at all times, including where this may be at variance with the financial interests of the agency or the foster carer
- equality, diversity and inclusion will underpin our service offer

## 7. PLACEMENT TYPES

All placements with Lorimer Fostering carers are made and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Regulations. We strongly believe that ensuring the right 'match' for the young people with our Foster Carers can enhance the experience of the placement for a young person.

### **Emergency**

The majority of our Foster Carers are able and approved to provide unplanned emergency placements for an individual young person and for sibling groups.

### **Respite**

Respite placements are available on an emergency or planned basis. Our Foster Carers are flexible to take one-off respite placements or provide respite on a regular basis.

### **Bridging**

We have a number of Foster Carers who are experienced in bridging children to adoption, permanence or independence. Bridging placements generally form part of the child's long-term plan and can last for anything up to two years.

### **Short Term**

All our Foster Carers are approved to provide short-term placements. These placements can vary in duration from a few weeks to months, while plans are being made for the child's future. Both the agency and our Foster Carers have a flexible approach and are prepared to adapt to meet the needs of the child.

### **Long Term**

Foster Carers, who are approved to provide long-term placements, must first evidence that they have the ability and are committed to offer a young person a home for as long as they need it. Long-term placements are matched in conjunction with the placing Local Authority and other professionals, where necessary.

### **Solo Placements**

Each young person has individual needs and circumstances that can be complex. To ensure that the needs of the young person are met, there may be situations where a young person needs to be the only child within a fostering household. Discussions at referral stage will be held to ensure the right 'match' is made.

### **Siblings**

We have a number of Foster Carers who are approved to take sibling placements to ensure relationships are maintained between them. A placing Local Authority will always try to ensure that siblings are kept together within one fostering household wherever possible.

### **Staying Put**

This is an arrangement whereby the young person will remain with their current Foster Carer(s) from aged 18 and older. This allows young people to stay with their foster family until they feel they are ready for independence.

## **8. RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF FOSTER CARERS**

A central concern of Lorimer Fostering is that the processes and procedures for assessing and approving prospective Foster Carers are thorough and safe.

All enquiries from prospective Foster Carers are dealt with efficiently and effectively. We acknowledge that each enquiry is unique and may require a service personalised to take into account their particular situation and needs; we endeavour and pride ourselves in being able to provide that personalised approach.

Enquiries can come in from a variety of sources e.g. Facebook, our Website, phone calls, word of mouth etc. The process we follow will be tailored to the needs and individual situation relating to each enquiry.

All enquiries will be replied to as soon as possible (and usually within a working day – the target being within minutes) via some or all of the following: email, text, letter / information pack, WhatsApp or phone calls. Which of these modes that is chosen and in which order is tailored to the details of the particular enquiry with the aim of maximising the quality of service we provide.

Phone or video calls or face to face meetings are the intermediate end goal of the above process; during these, the enquiry will be explored and information gathered.

When the recruitment team feel that they have sufficient information to progress the enquiry, they will seek advice from the assessment social work team about the merits of the enquiry and whether an initial visit / screening call is appropriate.

If an initial visit / screening call is deemed appropriate, this will be arranged to suit all parties. Following this visit / call, the Social Worker will produce a report and make a recommendation in relation to the enquirer's suitability to foster.

A decision will then be made by the recruitment team on whether to proceed to assessment and a tailored programme for that particular applicant will be enacted.

Lorimer Fostering uses the CoramBAAF Form F competency-based assessment framework. There are clear timescales in place for the assessment and approval of applicants, and for the checking processes that need to be done in relation to applicants.

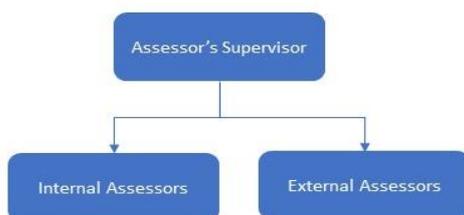
Lorimer Fostering uses a combination of internal and external Form F Assessors. All Assessing Social Workers are supervised by a qualified and experienced Form F Supervisor in relation to their assessment work; this enables Lorimer Fostering to be confident that relevant matters are being addressed within the course of the assessment, and that the assessment is being undertaken in accordance with Lorimer Fostering's timescales and standards.

Completed Form F assessments are presented at the Fostering Panel, and applicants are expected to be in attendance for this.

The Fostering Panel will consider the application and make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

The Agency Decision Maker will make their decision, having taken into account the comments and recommendations made by the Fostering Panel.

Approved Foster Carers are advised of the outcome of their application verbally and in writing.



## 9. TRAINING, SUPPORTING AND REVIEWING FOSTER CARERS

All foster carer applicants undertake mandatory training before they are approved as Foster Carers.

Following approval, Foster Carers are strongly encouraged (and, if necessary mandated) to take advantage of training opportunities that would benefit their ability to care for children more safely and effectively.

The following are some of the core mandatory post-approval training undertaken by our Foster Carers:

- Child Protection
- First Aid

- Behaviour Management / de-escalation techniques
- Record Keeping
- Internet Safety & CSE
- Risk Assessment and Safer Caring

In addition, Lorimer Fostering will commission training based on the needs of Foster Carers and prevailing placement issues within the service. Most training is commissioned from independent trainers, sometimes with a member of the Social Work team or a Foster Carer from the agency.

All Foster Carers are required to complete the TSD Standards within twelve months of their approval, and Lorimer Fostering offers a range of materials, workbooks, support and guidance to assist them in this.

## 10. COMMUNICATION & SUPERVISION

All approved Foster Carers have an allocated qualified Supervising Social Worker, each of whom has a caseload of approximately 12 carer households; this allows for a high level of support to be provided to each Foster Carer. The service has standards for frequency of visits, and where there is a child in place, this will usually range from once a week to once a month, dependent on the nature of the placement, experience of the Foster Carer and the challenges presented by the child placed. If a worker is absent, cover will be arranged for the Foster Carer, who will be given the name of a person to contact. All Foster Carers have access to staff 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

All approved Foster Carers receive access to our Foster Carers' Handbook. This was redrafted by the agency, following consultation with Foster Carers, and provides a comprehensive guide for Foster Carers in relation to a wide variety of issues, along with information about where to find additional helpful resources. All approved Foster Carers are enrolled as members of FosterTalk, and have access to their resources, as well as their advice and representations service. This also includes access to thousands of discounts to high street stores, leisure facilities, breaks away and days out.

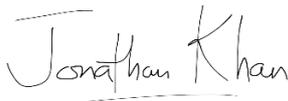
Lorimer Fostering has a dedicated area of our website for our Foster Carers. We also use our internal CHARMS system to aid communication between the agency and our Foster Carers. These are used to update Foster Carers on legislative changes that may affect them, and also to let Foster Carers know about developments and changes within the agency. Foster Carers are also regularly asked for their opinions about particular issues and are encouraged to contact the Registered Manager if they feel they want to discuss particular issues. We aim to hold a Foster Carer forum every 6 months, and the format has been composed in consultation with our Foster Carers to facilitate an environment that they feel best meets their needs. This may include a guest speaker, followed by an opportunity for us to update our Foster Carers about the agency and consult with Foster Carers about relevant matters. Foster Carers are often offered the opportunity to have some time without any staff present, in order to discuss any issues relevant to them.

Placed young people receive the agency's Young Person's Guide, which was redrafted following consultation with young people placed within Lorimer Fostering. When creating the guide, placed young people were brought together in small groups to think about what they wanted from it. Forums are now held for our children and young people in a fun and exciting environment; they are given the opportunity to communicate, both with the agency and other children and young people, in a relaxed setting. This is often then followed by a fun activity suggested by the young people themselves during previous forums.

Foster Carers receive a weekly allowance for the placed child, and a weekly professional fee. Foster Carers can also claim expenses to cover mileage in respect of young people.

Most young people placed by the agency are placed in a planned way, which allows time for information gathering and introductions. At the point at which a referral for a placement comes into the agency, and a particular carer is being considered, the Registered or Team Manager oversees the matching process. Where possible and appropriate, young people are placed within or close to their placing authority; this enables us to ensure that educational and contact arrangements can be managed by the agency. Each carer has a family safe care policy, and an individual safe care policy for the child/young person. This is reviewed regularly by the Supervising Social Worker. In addition, Foster Carers have a supervision contract that is particular to the needs of the Foster Carer in looking after the placed child.

Every Foster Carer is reviewed annually by the agency (on an 11-month cycle), although a significant incident, significant complaint or allegation would also lead to a review. In addition to this, all First Annual Reviews are done on a 9-month cycle. Reviews are carried out by an independently contracted Social Worker. A Foster Carer's first review, or a review following an incident, would be presented at the Fostering Panel. In conducting a review, information is sought from placed children, Local Authority Social Workers, Foster Carers and the Supervising Social Worker. All matters involving a serious complaint or allegation against a Foster Carer are brought to panel as a means of ensuring independent scrutiny, rigour and safety.

	<b>ASHLEY HIGGINS</b>	<b>DR JONATHAN KHAN</b>
	Registered Manager	Managing Director & Responsible Individual
Signature		
Date	06 April 2022	06 Apr 2022