



Statement of Purpose and Function

Lorimer Fostering
Lorimer House
2a Carrington Lane
Sale
Manchester, M33 5ND

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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 Services (England) 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.

Lorimer Fostering's Statement of Purpose provides a range of information, which is intended for a wide audience including:

- Lorimer Fostering staff
- Foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Children and young people who are placed with Lorimer Fostering
- Local authorities who place or are considering placing children and young people with Lorimer Fostering's foster carers
- Colleagues from other social care agencies
- The general public

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 suitably qualified and 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 Responsible Individual, 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



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) and logical frameworks. In addition, he has undertaken courses in a wide range of fields from Health & Safety, Website 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.

LOUISE FORSDIKE qualified as a social worker in 2018 having gained extensive experience of working with adults and children with physical and learning disabilities. She has focussed her social work career in the fostering sector, working as a supervising social worker at Lorimer initially before gaining her Practice Educator Certificate and progressing onto the management team at Lorimer Fostering as the Recruitment and Operations Manager. Louise has a particular interest in foster carer recruitment as well as quality assurance and auditing; to this end she has direct oversight of all new applicants to the agency and their assessments as well as the post-approval processes and requirements.

RACHAEL KHAN is a director and is responsible for the financial administration of Lorimer Fostering. Rachael has a significant role at the enquiry stage in developing relationships 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 Registered Manager (Designate), Supervising Social Workers, a Marketing Officer, a strong group of Administrators and Youth Engagement/Support Workers.

5. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To provide good outcomes for all children and young people placed with Lorimer Fostering.
- To provide children looked after with foster placements that are safe, warm and nurturing.
- To ensure that placed children are given all the support they need to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- To ensure that placed children are provided with the means and the support to be healthy.
- To ensure that placed children 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 learning and development 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 looked after, 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 have the right to form secure attachments within a warm, nurturing and respectful fostering household.
- All placed children 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.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion will underpin our service offer.

7. PLACEMENT TYPES

All placements with Lorimer carers are made and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Regulations. We strongly believe that ensuring the right 'match' for the children with our foster carers can enhance the experience of the placement for a child.

Emergency

The majority of our foster carers are able and approved to provide unplanned emergency placements for children.

Short Break (Respite)

Short Break placements are available on an emergency or planned basis. Our foster carers are flexible to take one-off short break placements or provide short breaks 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 forms part of the child's long-term plan and can last for anything up to two years. We are phasing out this approval category as its meaning is encompassed within the 'Short Term' approval term.

Short Term

Most of our foster carers are approved to provide short-term placements. These placements can vary in duration from a few weeks to months or longer, 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 child 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 child needs to be the only child looked after 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 where possible.

Staying Put

This is an arrangement whereby the young person will remain with their current foster carer(s) from aged 18 and onwards. 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. social media platforms 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 felt to be appropriate.

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

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 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. Assessing social workers are supervised by a Form F Supervisor in relation to their assessment work; this enables Lorimer 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's timescales and standards.

Completed Form F assessments are presented at the fostering panel, and applicants are normally 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 recommendations made by the fostering panel.

Approved foster carers are advised of the outcome of their application verbally and in writing.



9. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORTING AND REVIEWING FOSTER CARERS

All foster carer applicants undertake training before they are approved as foster carers.

Following approval, foster carers take advantage of learning opportunities that would benefit their ability to care for children more safely and effectively.

The following are some of the mandatory post-approval learning undertaken by our foster carers:

- Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Understanding Behaviour
- Reporting & Recording
- Internet Safety
- Safer Caring &
- Managing Allegations

In addition, Lorimer will offer learning based on the individual needs of foster carers and prevailing placement issues within the service; these courses may be run by internal staff or by independent trainers as is most appropriate for the course in question.

All foster carers are required to complete the TSD Standards within twelve months of their first approval, and Lorimer 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 protected caseload; 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 be at least once a month, but may be more often as is needed on a case by case basis. 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 support 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 Foster Carer Microsoft SharePoint Hub. 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 support groups every 3-6 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.

Placed children and young people receive the agency's Children'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. There are two Children's Guides, one aimed at younger children and other for older children (12+). These are to help all young people in our care have an understanding at an age and cognitive level appropriate to their individual needs. We also have an audio version of the children's guide and would seek to draft other versions as and when the individual circumstances arise i.e. braille or alternative language.

Foster Carers receive a weekly allowance for the placed child, along with a weekly professional fee. Foster carers can also claim expenses to cover mileage in respect of children and 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 other 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 safer caring plan, and an individual safer care plan and risk assessment 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 at least annually by the agency (ideally 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 foster carer reviews are done on a 9-to-11-month cycle. Reviews are carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced 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. 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.

	LOUISE FORSDIKE	DR JONATHAN KHAN
	Registered Manager (Designate)	Managing Director & Responsible Individual
Signature		
Date	14 July 2023	14 July 2023