



## Policy Number 1

Version 06/11	Statement of Purpose	Review Date Due: June 2012
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### 1. The Aims, Objectives and Principles of the Fostering Service

Fostering North East is an Independent Fostering Service, which provides quality services for children and young people who have a range of needs and disabilities. The Fostering Service is a project of St Cuthberts Care which is a large social care charity in the North East of England.

The work of the Fostering Service is based on the principles underpinning The Children Acts (1989, 2004, 2008) and The Human Rights Act 1998.

The primary role of Fostering North East's Foster Carers is to enable children to develop to their full potential, through a positive experience of family life. The outcomes identified in **Every Child Matters** as being important for childhood and later life are a useful focus in this area. This fundamental role reflects the mission statement of the Charity which states that:

***St Cuthberts Care is a charity working for the common good by enabling people to develop to their personal potential.***

Fostering North East Service provides a range of placements for children and young people who are unable to remain within their families.

In the belief that all children are best looked after in their immediate or extended families, the Fostering Service also provides short-breaks to those families who are struggling with the demands of parenthood, and who need regular respite in order to enable them to continue to care for their children in the long-term. This service is particularly relevant for families where there is a child with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or other complex needs. It can also be provided to long-term carers who require short-breaks.

### AIMS

1. To provide all children who are placed in Fostering North East's foster homes with a positive experience of family life

### Objectives:

- To work closely with Foster Carers to provide an environment in which the child is kept healthy
- To provide an environment where the child *is* safe and *feels* safe
- To encourage and support foster children to enjoy and achieve.
- To encourage foster children to make a positive contribution to what is happening to them and around them
- To encourage foster children to achieve economic well-being

**2. To work in partnership with parents and birth relatives of children placed with Fostering North East Foster Carers.**

**Objectives:**

- To provide clear information about the fostering services offered by the Agency to birth parents of children placed in Fostering North East's foster homes
- To involve parents/appropriate relatives in introductory visits, Placement plans, and review meetings where this is in the best interests of the child.
- To obtain evaluation/written feedback from parents/birth relatives regarding the service their child is receiving.
- With reference to short-break services, to maintain the parental roles as pivotal to the scheme.

**3. To support and promote Foster Carers in the often complex and demanding task of meeting the holistic needs of children in their care.**

**Objectives:**

- To provide ongoing training for all Foster Carers, based on an assessment of their individual experience and needs.
- To provide all Foster Carers with a named support worker to work closely with themselves and their families.
- To organise a programme of regular training and support groups for Foster Carers so that they can meet together in formal and informal settings, to gain new knowledge and skills, to share experiences and to learn from each other.
- To operate a 24 hour support-line
- To listen to Foster Carers' views at all stages and to obtain feedback about the service in order to continually strive to make improvements.

**4. To provide a programme of regular short-breaks to children, often with disabilities or complex needs, in order to prevent family/ permanent foster care breakdown**

**Objectives:**

- To work in close collaboration with the Local Authorities who have assessed the children and families as in need of this service and obtain all the relevant information from them about the child and their needs
- To work closely with the child and their parents and ensure that the parents remain central to the scheme, for example by including them at all stages and consulting and obtaining feedback from them
- To ensure that Foster Carers offering this service receive relevant and timely training and specialist information as required to meet the often complex needs of the children

**5. To work in close partnership with Local Authority personnel who place children with Fostering North East's Foster Carers.**

**Objectives:**

- To provide Local Authorities with accurate information about the schemes and costs for those schemes, offered by the Fostering Service.
- To attend introductory and planning meetings with and/or on behalf of the Foster Carers.
- To attend statutory reviews, Case Conferences and other meetings as appropriate with and/or on behalf of the Foster Carers.
- To work together with the child's social worker to ensure the child's needs are kept central at all times.

## 2. Standards of Care

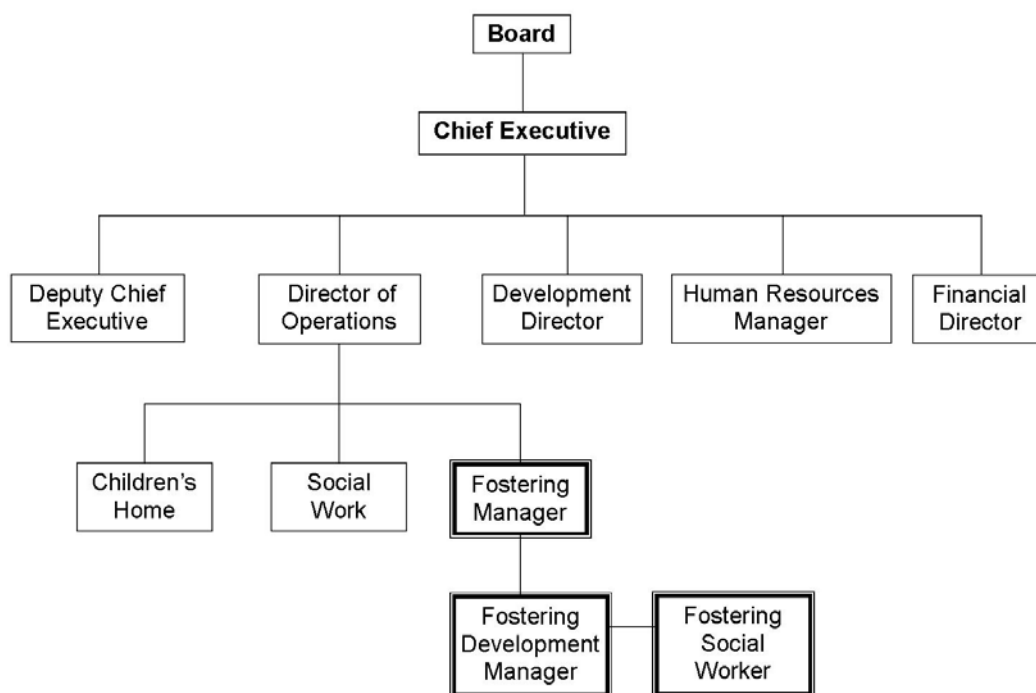
The Charity adheres to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and its policies reflect these. Through feedback and annual review Fostering North East will continually strive to improve the quality of all services.

## 3. The Status and Constitution of the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service of St Cuthberts Care, known as Fostering North East, is registered as an Independent Fostering Charity under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. The Registered number is B030000494

## 4. The Management structure of the Charity

**Fostering Agency Organogram**



## 5. Staff list for the Charity – June 2011

**Janice Bell** –Director of Operations.

**Qualifications:** March 1985, RNMH. April 2005, Diploma in Social Work – Specialist area Children and Family Services.

**Experience:** Worked mainly in managerial roles with children and adults with learning and physical disabilities. Worked within individual homes, hospital, residential and day care settings.

**Liz Guest** – Fostering Manager.

**Qualifications:** BA (Hons) Social Studies, Diploma in Applied Social Studies, Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW). Oct 05, Level 4 NVQ in Management by MCQ.

**Experience:** Medical Social work with children, Child and family social work in area social services teams, adoption and fostering for 20yrs.

**Peter Bolam** – Fostering Social Worker; Full-time.

**Qualifications:** Certificate in Social Services.

**Experience:** Worked with children and young people within a Fostering Preparation Unit, and also worked with adults and children within Residential Family Assessment Services.

**Sarah Croft** – Fostering Development Manager: Full time

**Qualifications:** BA Joint Hons in Social Science and Community and Disability Studies (1999), DipSW (2004), Practice Teaching Award (2006)

**Experience:** Previously worked in a residential unit for adults with learning disabilities for 3 years, as a family support worker for 1.5 years, then as senior practitioner and Head of Assessment of a residential family assessment centre for 3 years. Then worked as a supervising social worker for 2.5 years.

The Fostering Agency also makes use of suitably qualified and experienced sessional social workers, for specific pieces of work, for example training, Form F assessments and Independent Support Services provided to Foster Carers of other agencies.

Peter Meek, David Bartles-Smith.

## **6. Numbers of Foster Carers and numbers of children/young people in Foster placements June 2011.**

16 house holds were registered

17 children were receiving a service

## **7. The number of complaints made against the Fostering Service**

There have been no complaints made against the Fostering Service in the past year. All Foster Carers are given information about the Complaints procedure on approval and all children /young people placed, their parents and Local Authority social workers are given the information on placement.

## **8. Services provided by the Fostering Service**

### **1. Long-Term or Permanent Placements**

Long-term placements can be arranged for children or young people, where they will receive care and support through to independence.

Placements for permanent care are carefully planned and introductions scheduled over a period of time depending on the child's and Foster Carers' needs.

Permanent placements are generally available for children over the age of 8/10 years as it is hoped that younger children's futures will be secured by adoption.

There may be situations where long-term placements are required for younger children who have specific medical needs or physical disabilities and the Fostering Service has been successful in the provision of a number of these placements in recent years.

Contact is generally an important feature of long-term care and is actively promoted and supported by Foster Carers, where appropriate.

Fostering North East places a high degree of importance on permanent Foster Carers meeting the educational needs of young people placed, so that each child is encouraged to attain his or her full potential.

Permanent Foster Carers are expected to assist the young people in their care with independence skills and to ensure they are fully consulted about decisions and plans for their future.

Because young people placed in permanent foster homes tend to have more complex needs, a high level of support is available to the Foster Carers.

## 2. Short Term

Short-term fostering is when a child, or children (maybe brothers and sisters) needs to be accommodated away from their birth family for a period of time, until plans can be made for their long-term future. As this service is often required in an emergency, introductions are not always possible, but it is preferable if these can be arranged prior to placement.

The reasons why short-term care is necessary could include a parent going into hospital, or neglect or abuse to the child, in which case they need a safe and caring family to stay with.

Children of all ages are in need of short-term placements, from toddlers to teenagers.

A short-term placement can last from a few weeks to a few months or even longer. The child becomes an important person in the foster family and attachments are made. However, Foster Carers are trained and supported to deal with the emotional issues and to work closely with all parties to successfully move the child on.

## 3. Short Break

This is generally a planned, organised service where a child or siblings stay with Foster Carers on a regular basis, maybe one or two weekends a month and sometimes extra in holiday periods.

The fundamental purpose of short break care is to assist parents to continue to care for their child at home for as long as possible by offering a structured package of breaks. This service is particularly beneficial to families where the children have special needs, eg. physical disabilities, learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural problems.

The service benefits the child by offering new relationships and experiences and a widening of their social circle. It benefits the parents by giving them “time out” and it can also benefit any other children in the family as it gives parents a chance to afford them more attention.

The short break service can also be made available to long-term Foster Carers who require a regular package of respite to enable them to provide the child in their care with a permanent home.

Foster Carers receive specific training/input relating to the child’s needs and they are expected to submit written feedback to the Fostering Service after each visit. This is then made available to the child’s social worker to enable monitoring of the service.

A Placement Plan, which forms part of the Child’s Care Plan is drawn up at the beginning of each placement and these will then be reviewed regularly by their Local Authority in accordance with Looked After Children regulations.

## 9. Procedures and processes for the recruiting, assessment, approval, training, support and review of Foster Carers.

*See Fostering Agency policy of same name.*

### Approval and Authorisation

Name	Job Title	Date
Authored by: Liz Guest	Fostering Manager	01/05/09
Approved by: Janice Bell	Director of Operations	01/05/09

## Change of Version

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Last Edited</b>
05/09	March 2009	New Format	01/0509 Liz Guest
06/10	June 2010	Reviewed, Liz Guest	
06/11	June 2011		June 2011, Liz Guest