

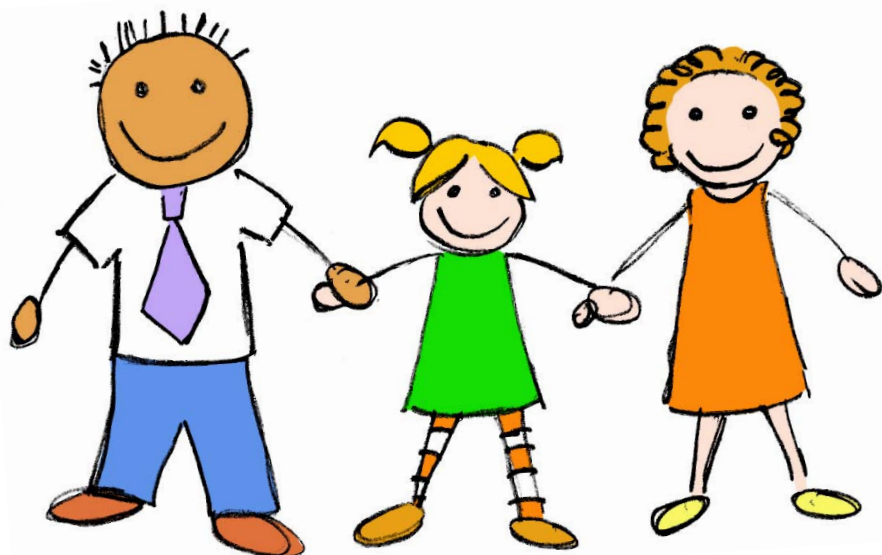
# Statement of Purpose



**Fostering**   
**North East** 

Part of St Cuthbert's Care

# The Principles of Fostering North East



**A**s an independent fostering service we provide quality services for children and young people who have a range of needs and disabilities. Our primary role is to enable children to develop to their full potential, through a positive experience of family life.

In the belief that all children are best looked after in their immediate or extended families, we provide 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.

In keeping with the Welfare Principle, we also provide a range of placements for children and young people who are unable to remain within their families.

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

## Our Standards of Care

We adhere to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and our policies reflect these.

Through feedback and annual review we continually strive to improve the quality of all services.



# Our Aims and Objectives

- To work closely with foster carers to provide an environment in which foster children are kept healthy
- To provide an environment where foster children *are* safe and *feel* 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 wellbeing

**To provide all our foster children with a positive experience of family life**

- To provide clear information about our services to birth parents and foster children
- To involve parents and appropriate relatives in introductory visits, placements plans and review meetings where this is in the best interests of the foster children
- 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

**To work in partnership with parents and birth relatives of children placed with our carers**

- To provide on-going 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 both 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 obtain feedback about the service in order to continually strive to make improvements

**To support and promote foster carers in the often complex and demanding task of meeting the holistic needs of children in their care**

- To work in close collaboration with the local authorities who have assessed the children and families in need of this service and obtain all the relevant information from them about the children and their needs
- To work closely with the children 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 these children

**To provide a programme of regular short-breaks to children, often with disabilities or complex needs in order to support families and permanent foster carers**

- To provide local authorities with accurate information about the schemes we offer and their costs
- To attend introductory and planning meetings with and/or on behalf of the foster carers
- To attend statutory reviews and other meetings as appropriate with and/or on behalf of the foster carers
- To work together with foster children's social workers to ensure that the children's needs are kept central at all times

**To work in close partnership with local authority personnel who place children with our carers**

## Services Provided

We aim 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 as part of a Placement Plan.

We believe that our role is to offer a complementary service to local authorities to enable provision of a wide range of safe, secure and appropriate foster care options including:

- Long-term or permanent placements
- Emergency placements
- Bridging placements
- Parent and child placements
- Single placements
- Short term or temporary placements
- Short Break
- Sibling placements
- Unaccompanied children

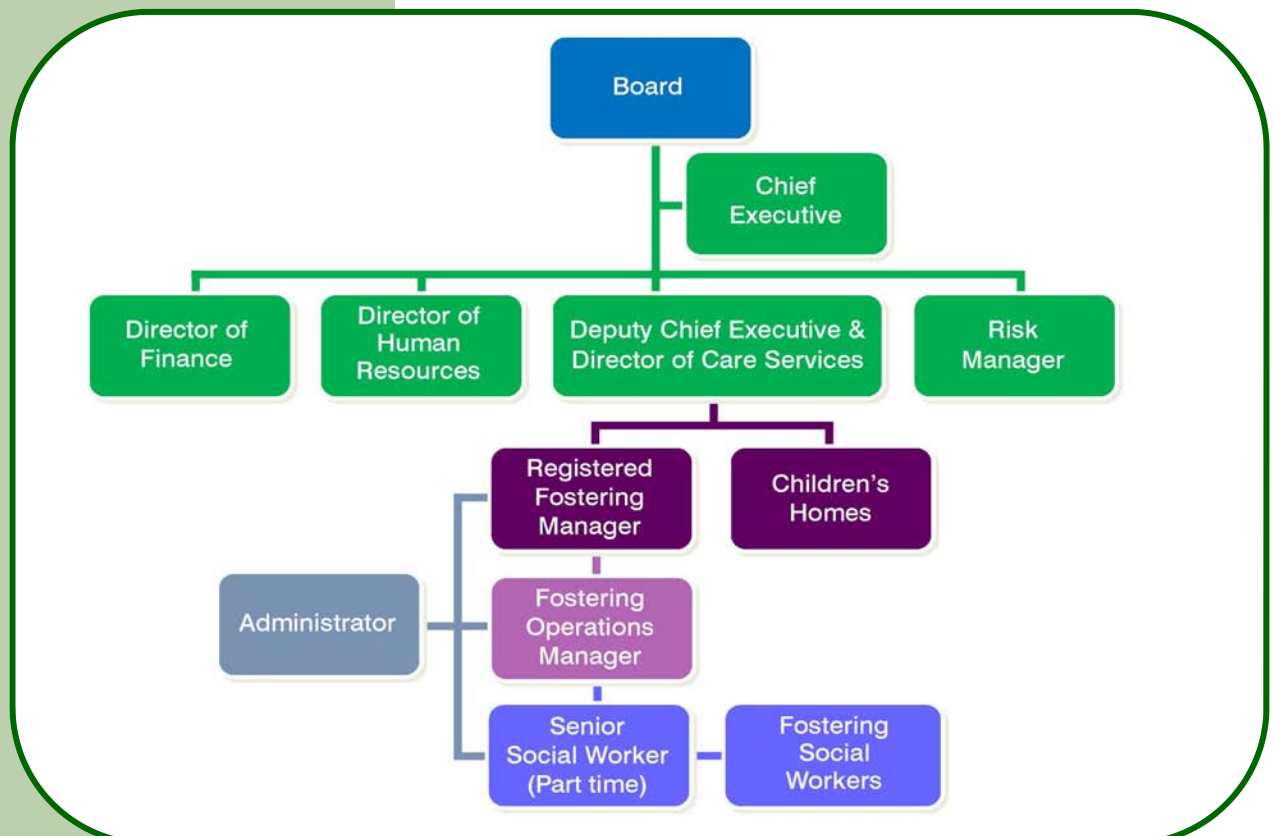
## Our Status and Constitution

Fostering North East is registered as an Independent Fostering Agency under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

The Registered number is B030000494.

## Our Management Structure

We are part of the charity and service provider St Cuthbert's Care. The management structure of the charity, with particular reference to our management, is shown below.



## Registered Manager

(Position currently vacant)

## Joann Gibson - Fostering Operations Manager

### Qualifications:

Counselling Certificate (2002), HEFC Health Studies (2008), HEFC Psychology (2009), HEFC Social Welfare (2009), BA (Hons) Social Work (2011), Practice Education Stage 1 (2015), Practice Education Stage 2 (2016).

### Experience:

Joann has previously undertaken social work placements in fostering, leaving care, residential care and safeguarding teams and was an SEN Primary School Governor within a regional local authority. Further social work tasks while employed by a social work agency include 24 hour parenting support and supporting young people within a homeless provision. Joann has worked within Fostering North East for over 6 years.

## Liz Guest - Senior Fostering Social Worker

### Qualifications:

BA (Hons) Social Studies (1973), Diploma in Applied Social Studies (1976), Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (1976) Level 4 NVQ in Management (2005).

### Experience:

Liz has in excess of 30 years experience in social work. She has worked in a range of settings including medical social work, child and family social work in area social services teams and adoption and fostering. She was our Registered Fostering Manager for 11 years until her retirement in 2014 and continues to work with the agency as our most experienced social worker.

## Lesley Tyers - Supervising Social Worker

### Qualifications:

BA (Hons) Social Work (2011), Diploma of Higher Education in Social Care (2009), Certificate of Higher Education in Social Care (2007), NCFE Level 2 Safeguarding Children & Young People

### Experience:

Lesley has over 17 years' experience of working with children and families. This has included work in secure and residential services with placements covering both adult and children's services.

## Vicky Thompson - Administrator

### Experience:

Vicky joined our team in February 2015. She is an accomplished administrator with a wealth of experience in family law. She worked in a legal practice for 14 years where she was able to develop skills including audio typing, letter writing and filing within a busy office.

She has worked regularly on cases involving care proceedings and child protection and therefore has a background in managing many of the tasks that are required of her within Fostering North East.

## Our Staff Team

As of May 2017 our staffing team has four permanent members of staff: Joann Gibson, Liz Guest, Lesley Tyers and Vicky Thompson.

A Registered Manager will be appointed in the near future.

In addition to our own staff, we make use of suitably qualified and experienced sessional workers, as the need arises, for specific pieces of work for example training, Form F assessments and children support work.

## Our Statistics

As of November 2016 there were:

- 22 registered households approved to take a range of placements aged 0 to 18 years
- 20 foster children in Fostering North East foster homes, of whom 1 was also receiving short breaks with other Fostering North East foster carers
- 2 staying put placements

## Complaints and Compliments

We regularly request feedback from all involved in the fostering service. All children and young people have access to a complaints form.

Should you wish to make a complaint, this should be done in writing to the Fostering Manager at the address on the back of this booklet.



# Our Procedures and Processes

## Recruitment and Approval of Carers

- Recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds with a wide variety of skills and experience
- Initial telephone screening, fostering pack and enquiry form
- Home screening visit
- Link up with current foster carers who match their circumstances
- Invitation to Skills to Foster training groups
- Home study undertaken
- References, enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service checks, medical reports sought and checks of social networking sites
- Application submitted to fostering panel and a recommendation made
- Decision made by Agency decision maker within seven working days of the receipt of recommendation from panel
- The foster carer is informed orally within two working days of the decision and in writing within five working days
- Foster Care Agreement drawn up as specified in **Schedule 5** of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011

## Training Carers

### Pre-approval training

The Skills to Foster training includes:

- Child development
- Loss and separation
- Feelings of birth parents
- Child protection
- Abuse and how it affects children's behaviour
- Managing difficult behaviour
- How to ensure safe caring
- Impact of fostering on the carer and their family
- Allegations against carers

### Post-approval training

A Personal and Professional Development Plan (PPDP) is drawn up for each carer and training needs are identified.

Training is provided by the agency via a number of routes.



## Post-approval training

- Courses offered by local authorities to carers and social workers
  - In-house St Cuthbert's Care courses
  - Distance learning
  - Courses provided by BAAF and Fostering Network
  - Training programme and carer's support groups planned a year in advance by Fostering North East
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## Supporting Carers

- A named supervising social worker who keeps in regular contact
  - 24-hour telephone helplines including legal advice
  - Insurance policies
  - Advice on allegations
  - Regular training, support groups and social activities including holiday opportunities
  - Respite packages arranged where required
- 

## Reviewing Carers

- First review takes place within six months of a placement and no later than a year
- Thereafter reviews take place whenever necessary, but at least once a year
- The annual inspection of the foster home takes place prior to the foster carers' review and a new Health and Safety checklist is completed with the foster carers
- As part of the annual inspection the support worker must be satisfied that the home and the immediate environment are free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury
- This annual inspection includes the safety of any vehicle used by the foster carers to transport foster children and any caravan, holiday home and allotment as applicable
- When undertaking a review the agency shall make such enquiries and obtain such information as is considered necessary in order to review whether the person continues to be suitable to act as a foster carer and that the household continues to be suitable





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Name	Job Title	Date	Review
Authored by: Liz Guest	Registered Fostering Manager	August 2012	
Approved by: Sheila Errington	Director of Children's Services	August 2012	
Reviewed & amended by: Joann Gibson	Fostering Operations Manager	Nov 2016	May 2017