



Statement of Purpose

North England Fostering Service

March 2025

Ofsted URN SC042759

Our Fostering Service address:
**Osprey House, Kingfisher Way, Silverlink
Business Park, North Tyneside, NE28 9NX**



Changing childhoods. Changing lives.

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“We have a good relationship and have a laugh, Vanessa is firm but fair which is really good for me and helps me.”

Young person in foster care



Legal Framework

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards as applying to fostering providers, including:

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011)

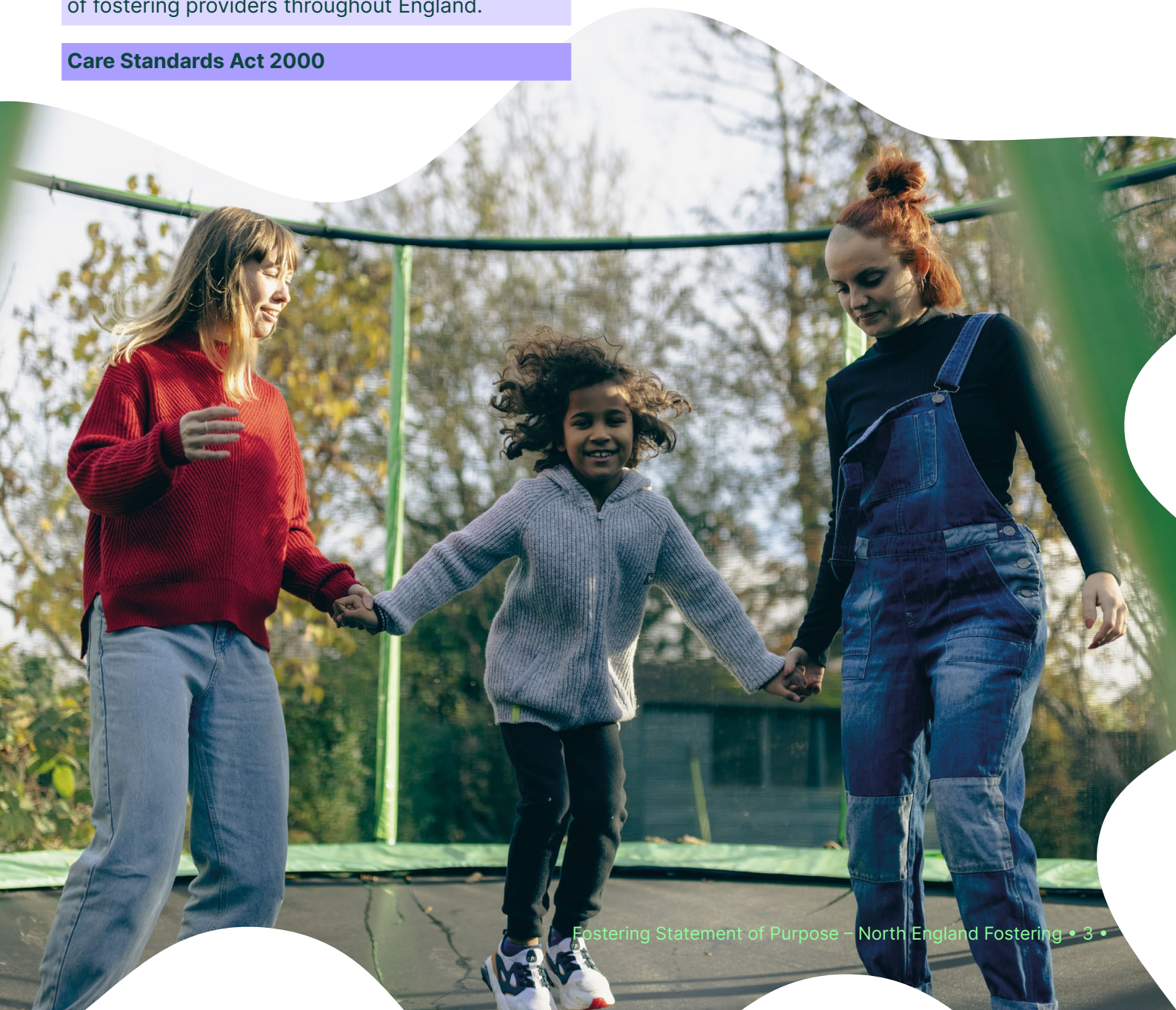
The Care Planning Placement and Case Reviews and Fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 govern the work of fostering providers throughout England.

Care Standards Act 2000

As part of the regulatory requirement, a copy of the Statement of Purpose will be provided to Ofsted and will be placed on Barnardo's website. The document is also available on request to: staff, placing Authorities, foster carers, prospective foster carers and children/young people.

This Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with these requirements and will be a useful source of information to Barnardo's staff, foster carers and prospective foster carers, children and young people who live with our foster carers, and also to colleagues from other agencies.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and at least annually.



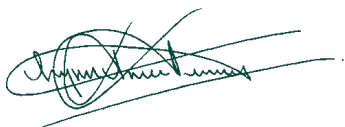
Message from CEO

For more than 150 years, Barnardo's has been changing childhoods and lives, including through our work helping hundreds of thousands of children and young people to live with loving foster families and adoptive parents.

Barnardo's supports around 370,000 children, young people, parents and carers each year through our services and partnerships across the UK.

We believe in all children and young people, and their potential. We support them, stand up for them and bring out the best in each and every child and young person.

We support foster carers to welcome children and young people who need a loving and supportive home. We provide over 20 fostering, adoption, and planned break services for families with children and young people of every age, gender, race and ability. Our comprehensive preparation, training and 24/7 support to foster carers makes us a trusted choice across the UK.



Lynn Perry MBE
Chief Executive, Barnardo's



Barnardo's Status and Constitution

Barnardo's is a company limited by guarantee (registered in England under number 61625) and a registered charity (numbers 216250 and SC037605). It was also registered as a trust corporation on 16 December 1926. Its governing instrument is the Memorandum and Articles of Association, most recently amended by special resolution passed on 17 July 2001.

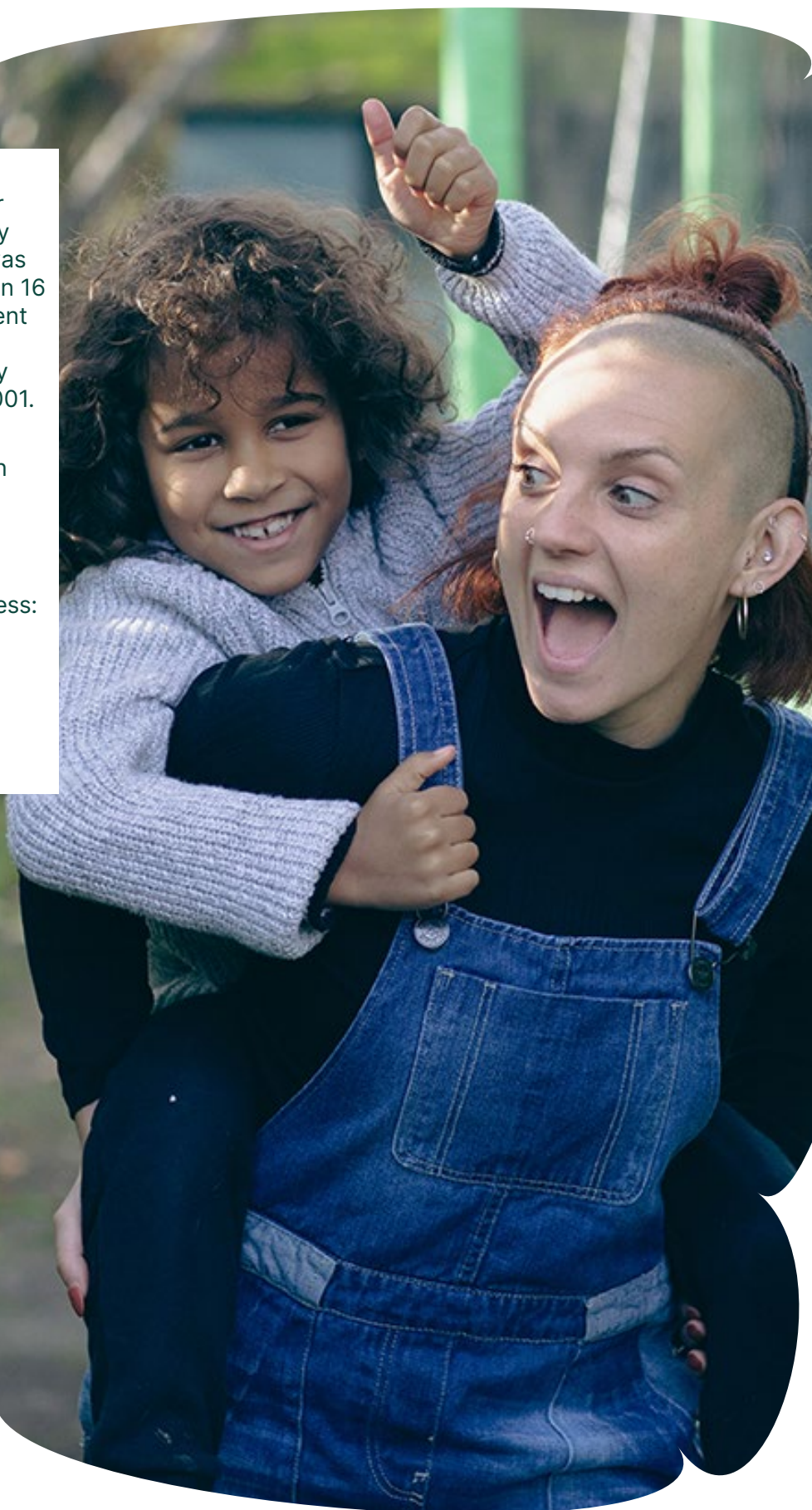
Barnardo's North England Fostering is part of Barnardo's Fostering & Adoption Services.

The Head of Fostering & Adoption is Brenda Farrell.

Fostering & Adoption Head Office Address:

**Barnardo's – Youth Village
Hudson Street
North Shields
NE30 1DL**

Telephone: **0191 296 3355**



Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

Aims

Barnardo's is a leading national independent fostering agency, providing fostering and planned break fostering across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

We aim to achieve high quality, stable foster homes for children and young people by ensuring that foster carers are appropriately recruited, assessed, trained, and supported within the required regulations and national minimum standards.

Objectives and Outcomes

1. To protect children and young people from abuse and neglect.
2. To recruit, assess, support and train foster carers to provide a range of foster homes for children/young people who are unable to live with their first families.
3. To provide planned break foster homes for children/young people living with their first families, and those living with our foster carers.
4. To ensure that foster carer recruitment matches the needs of the children/ young people we aim to look after in our foster homes, so that children/ young people have the opportunity to live within a family which values, recognises and supports their ethnic origin, cultural heritage, religion.
5. To provide support, regular supervision and training opportunities to equip foster carers in meeting the complex needs of children/ young people in our foster homes.
6. To ensure that all legal, regulatory and minimum standard requirements are met in relation to the approval, review and supervision of carers and provision of foster homes to children/ young people, and to monitor that they are being met via quality assurance processes.
7. To provide a 24/7 helpline service for foster carers.
8. To promote secure attachments and stability of foster homes for children and young people in order to achieve better outcomes for their health, education, employment and future independence.
9. To prepare children/ young people adequately for when they leave their foster family and create lifelong attachments with foster carers.
10. To maintain and promote contact between foster children and their first families and or significant others and communicate effectively with parents as appropriate.
11. To promote positive working relationships/ partnerships between Barnardo's fostering, adoption and planned break services and local authorities or trusts to facilitate communication and promote good practice for the benefit of children and young people who are fostered by the service.
12. To ensure that the Fostering Panel operates according to legislation and regulations in relation to foster carer approvals, reviews, allegations and complaints.
13. To ensure that the way in which the Service develops, considers the views and wishes of its foster carers, the foster children, and staff by encouraging feedback from everyone in the foster home.
14. To ensure continuous improvement and development of the fostering services through regular training for staff around changes to legislation and regulations and identifying the needs and type of specialist foster homes required.

Service Registration

Name and address of the Registered Provider:

**Barnardo's Fostering North England,
Osprey House, Kingfisher Way,
Silverlink Business Park,
North Tyneside, NE28 9NX.**

Responsible Individual:

**Alison Rowland, Barnardo's Fostering
North England, Osprey House,
Kingfisher Way, Silverlink Business Park,
North Tyneside, NE28 9NX**

**The relevant qualifications and experience
of the Responsible Individual:**

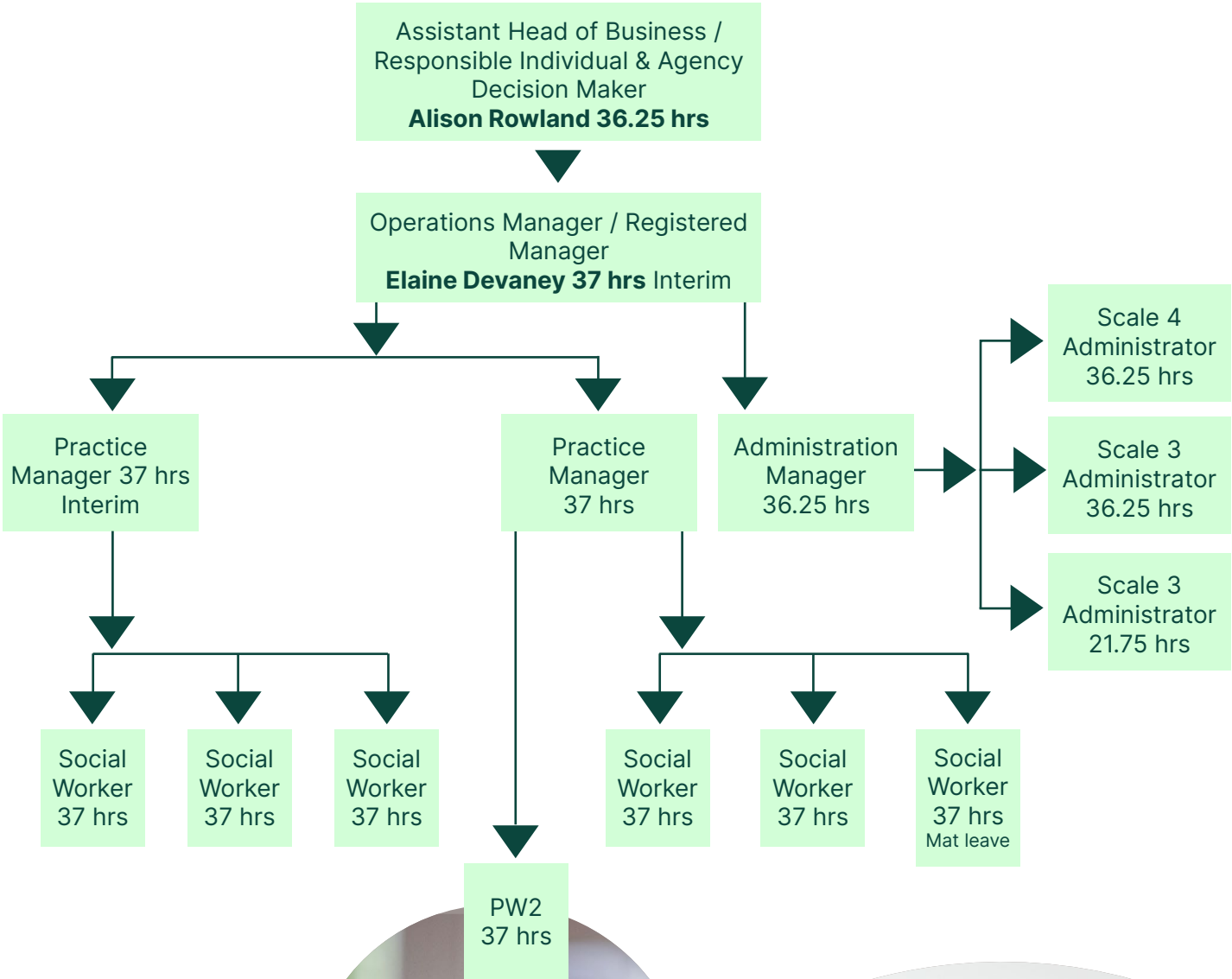
Alison Rowland, MA in Applied Social Studies (1997 Durham University) and a Diploma in Social Work. Experience of residential care, safeguarding, youth justice and fostering and adoption. Has worked in Barnardo's since 2001.

**The relevant qualifications and experience
of the Registered Manager:**

Elaine Devaney BSc Hons in Social Science & Social Work, University of Middlesex, Management Qualification Level 7 Health and Social Care, social work experienced since 1991.



Service & Staff Structure



Job roles and qualifications

Operations Manager/Registered Manager

Our professionally qualified Social Workers registered with the Social Work England and hold management qualifications or working to attain these. Operations Managers / Registered Managers are responsible for the overall operation of the fostering services to foster carers, children and young people.

The Operations/Registered Managers are responsible for budgetary control and involved with the development and implementation of the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation. The Operations/Registered Managers are responsible for the management of Practice Managers, sit on Panel as Panel Advisor, ensure all policies and procedures are up to date, complete audits of the service to ensure a high standard, and monitor and advise on serious complaints and allegations ensuring appropriate procedures are followed and safeguards are in place.

Practice Managers

Our professionally qualified Social Workers are registered with Social work England and are responsible for the supervision and management of the Social Workers and Support Workers. Practice Managers take responsibility for developing training and supporting services for foster carers. They coordinate training alongside responsibilities for recruitment and assessment.

Supervising Social Workers (SSW)

Our qualified Social Workers registered with the Social Work England and undertake the assessment, support and annual review of foster carers. SSWs work in partnership with the looked after child's Social Worker to promote good outcomes. SSWs also support training, coordinate support groups and cover the out-of-hours support service.

Support Workers

Our qualified social care workers with a minimum level qualification at NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care (or equivalent). Support Workers provide a range of support services to children living with foster carers, including transport, supervising contact. They are also involved in support groups for carers and provide support around the completion of the Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) as well as running activities for both looked after children and birth children and assisting in carer recruitment activity.

Service Administrators

Service Senior Administrators undertake financial duties in the fostering service including invoicing, carer payments, credit control and accounts payable. They are responsible for health and safety and ensure that the office remains a safe working environment with appropriate risk assessments completed by staff. Service Administrators supervise the Administration team.

Admin Assistants

Undertake a wide range of admin tasks to support the work of the service such as inputting and monitoring of statistical data, coordinating training, ensuring all checks and repeat checks are completed.

Foster Homes We Provide

Emergency

We have foster carers who can provide unplanned / emergency foster homes, for children/ young people need somewhere to stay often at short notice and with little information.



Solo

Solo foster homes are offered to children who could be a risk to other children and young people, or whose behaviour is so challenging that carers cannot offer enough support if other children are present.



Short Term

Short term foster homes can last for up to two years, while long-term plans are being made.



Assessment Foster Homes

Specific assessments can be carried out to a local authority's requirements. Typical assessments include the child's development, current/long-term needs and therapeutic requirements.



Planned Breaks/ External Planned Breaks

We have foster carers who provide planned breaks either on a regular basis or one-off breaks. These can be for children/young people living at home with their parents, children/ young people living with our foster carers or children/young people from other fostering agencies.



Bridging

We provide homes with foster carers who are experienced in 'bridging' children to adoptive homes, permanent foster homes or independence. Bridging foster homes form part of a long-term plan for the child and can last up to two years.



Brothers and Sisters

We have foster carers who provide homes for brothers and sisters so that they don't need to be separated.



Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

number of our foster carers are skilled in providing homes for children/ young people who are unaccompanied from overseas and seeking a place of safety.



Parent and Child

These are foster homes for parents who are under 18, so they can receive support in developing parenting skills. Foster carers assist local authorities/trusts with assessments by providing information relating to parenting capacity/capabilities.



Children with Additional Needs

We provide foster homes for children and young people who have additional health needs such as health and or a disability.



Specialist

We also offer specialist foster homes for children/ young people for example who are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, trafficking, and /or display harmful sexualised behaviours. These foster carers are provided with additional support and training.



Post 18 Homes

These enable young people to remain in their foster home on a 'staying put' basis, once they reach 18, and foster carers will support their transition into adulthood and living independently.



Recruitment & Support for Foster Families

Barnardo's policies, procedures and standards for the recruitment and assessment of foster carers are in line with required regulations and standards for fostering services.

Enquiries

On receiving an enquiry from a prospective foster carer, we take basic information and provide an information pack. An initial home visit is then arranged to discuss in more detail the work of the service and to answer any queries or concerns the enquirer may have. A decision will be reached as to whether the prospective foster carer wishes to and is, suitable to proceed.

Assessment and Approval

If a prospective foster carer is suitable and wishes to proceed, an application to be assessed is completed, including consent for the Fostering Service to undertake background checks to ascertain suitability to foster.

The process for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two parts. This is referred to as **Stage 1** and **Stage 2**. These stages can be carried out concurrently, but the information for **Stage 1** must be sought as soon as possible, and the decision about whether an applicant has successfully completed Stage 1 must be made within 10 working days of all the information required in that stage being received by the fostering agency.

Stage 1

In accordance with Regulation 26 (1A) the information gathered in Stage 1 includes:

- Full details of the applicant(s) and all household members as well as any children of the applicants living elsewhere.
- Criminal records checks undertaken on household members via the DBS / PVG/ Disclosure Scotland/ Access NI on all household members 16 years and over (over 10 in NI), as well as checks with the local authority/ trust, and any previous fostering / adoption agencies.
- Criminal records checks may also be undertaken on any other regular visitor to the household who may have care of foster children. Some checks are repeated every three years.
- The applicant/s are required to have a medical examination which is completed by their GP, who sends the completed Medical Report to Barnardo's Medical Adviser for comments about the applicant/s health.
- The applicant/s is also asked to name three to six personal referees from which a minimum of three will be selected to provide written references and who will also be interviewed as part of the approval process. Where appropriate we also ask for permission to approach the applicant's current or past employer. Adult children and previous partners will also be contacted.

Stage 1 of the assessment process is intended to provide the Agency Decision Maker with basic information about the applicant's suitability (or not) to proceed to Stage 2 of the assessment in which more detailed information is collected.



Stage 2

If it is decided to undertake Stage 2 of the assessment, regulation 26(2) requires the fostering service to obtain the information about the applicant set out in Part 2 of Schedule 3:

- Details of personality and childhood and life experiences.
- Capacity to care for a child/ young person from any particular religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background.
- Past and present employment or occupation, standard of living, leisure activities and interests.
- Previous experience (if any) of caring for their own and other children.
- Skills, competence and potential relevance to their capacity to care effectively for a child/ young person who will be fostered by them.

A qualified and experienced social worker will carry out the assessment by carrying out a number of visits to the applicant at home, and virtually, meeting all members of the family and gather information about the applicant's experience and skills. The information will be collated and forms the basis of an assessment report (Coram BAAF Form F). This report is shared and discussed with the applicants.

During the assessment preparation period, Skills to Foster training is provided by the Service. This includes the role and responsibilities of foster carers, working with different agencies, and child/ young person attachment, trauma and development. All applicants are required to attend.

Panel

The completed assessment report is presented to the Fostering Panel. Applicants are invited to attend the Panel.

The Panel will make a recommendation about the suitability of the applicants to be approved as foster carers. The recommendation is then passed to a Senior Manager in Barnardo's, who is nominated as the organisation's 'Agency Decision Maker', who makes the final decision about approval on behalf of Barnardo's.

Applicants are informed verbally and in writing of the Agency Decision Maker's final decision.

Matching

Our matching process and planning take account of our foster carers particular strengths, skills and experience.

Our induction training and support programme for foster carers enables us to assess and match children and young people with suitable foster parents. This promotes good foster home stability and is always child/young person focussed.

All children/young people placed with foster carers have access to health, activity, education, and employment opportunities in accordance with their assessed needs, considering for example, their age, cultural identity and cognitive and physical abilities.

Foster Carer Reviews

Reviews take place by Barnardo's Fostering Service, in line with regulatory requirements of a foster carer Regulation 28 (2).

A first review must take place within 12 months after approval and subsequent reviews take place every 12 months thereafter. Barnardo's must be satisfied that the foster carers continue to meet the required standards as set out in Regulation 28 (4).

Reviews may also take place at other times for example as a result of a request to change the terms of approval; following a serious complaint, allegation of abuse, or other matters of serious / safeguarding concern, in response to a significant change of circumstances, such as a carer's adult child returning home, relationship problems or separations, significant health issues, pregnancy, etc.

Foster carer support

Barnardo's Fostering Service values the work that foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people in their care. The key to a successful foster home is the quality of support that foster carers receive. Barnardo's Fostering Service offers the following support to all our foster carers:

- Supervision and support from a named qualified and experienced Social Worker Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.
- Access to a 24/7 out of hours helpline.
- Frequent visits, (minimum of once per month) and regular telephone contact from the supervising social worker.
- At least two unannounced visits per year.
- Regular support group meetings and/or Buddy Support.
- Events for children/young people in foster homes, children of foster carers and foster carers.
- A comprehensive post-approval training programme which is linked to Training, Support and Development Standards.
- Foster carer handbook
- Where appropriate, and where in line with the child/young person's care plan, a planned break service to provide alternative experiences for the child/young person.
- Liaison with local authorities/trusts including attendance at relevant meetings.
- A level of financial support that values and recognises foster carer's skills and time including a foster carer fee and fostering allowance.

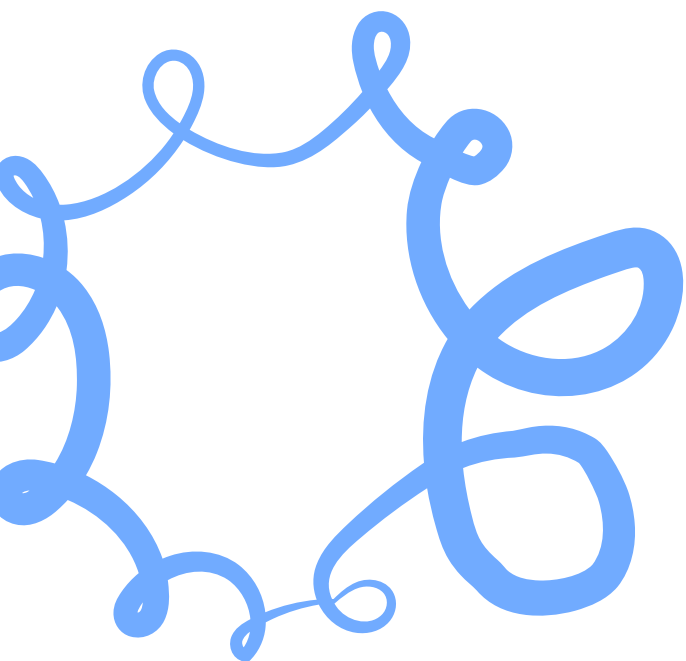
Foster carer training

Barnardo's Fostering Service recognises that fostering is a complex and demanding role and we are committed to providing high quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers. Training is provided to help foster carers develop their fostering role, to improve knowledge and to define and refine the skills they already have. The training is delivered within an explicit value base which promotes equality of opportunity and recognises and celebrates diversity. It seeks to ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in providing safe care and in protecting children/young people from harm.

Foster Carers are supported to complete Training Support and Development Standards for foster carers (TSDS) within 12 months of Approval for full time and 18 months for Planned Break foster carers.

Training is offered throughout a carer's career with Barnardo's Fostering Service and incorporates a range of topics which evolve with changes in practice, legislation and needs, examples of which are:

- safeguarding
- recording
- first aid
- managing behaviour
- attachment
- trauma, bereavement, loss
- health and safety
- relationship and sexual health
- sexual exploitation
- resilience building
- self-esteem & identity
- life story work
- managing and promoting family time
- child development
- equal opportunities
- drug and alcohol awareness
- education and health
- anti-radicalisation



Quality Monitoring & Governance

There are a range of systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of Barnardo's fostering services, to ensure they are effective and that the quality is of an appropriate standard:

Regulation 35 reports

Foster Carer Annual Reviews

Foster carers and foster children/young people review feedback forms

Children/young people feedback from participation sessions

Annual staff appraisals

Monthly supervision of foster carers

Regular supervision of staff

Feedback from foster carers regarding training



Feedback from other professionals

Feedback from local authority/trust workers

Evaluation of foster carers by trainers

Feedback from panel members and panel attendees

File Audits

Quarterly performance & improvement reviews by the Assistant Director and Head of Service Development & Quality

External Monitoring via LA/Trust/Framework monitoring processes

External monitoring via regulatory bodies such as care inspectorate and Ofsted

Young Inspectors



Complaints, compliments, allegations & whistleblowing

Complaints

The aim of Barnardo's complaints process is to resolve a complaint at the most informal level possible. Complaints can be made in writing or orally to any member of staff up to and including the CEO.

The stages to managing any complaint are:

Stage One - Early Resolution

A worker or manager listens to the complaint and agrees a course of action to resolve the situation. It is an opportunity to resolve concerns or complaints without recourse to a formal process

Stage One - Formal Complaint

When the worker or manager has been unable to resolve concerns at the early resolution stage or the complaint is such that the manager considers a stage one would be the first step.

Stage Two - Final Complaint

When the complaint has been investigated at Stage One and the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome. The decision to investigate at stage two is made by the complaints lead manager. Another manager will be the investigating officer and an independent person will shadow them in the investigation.

Complaints contact:

Barnardo's Head Office, Tanners Lane, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

Telephone: **020 8550 8822** Email: cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk



Compliments

We celebrate our work and achievements with compliments and commendations being recorded. Here is a selection of comments made about our staff and the services we offer:

Ofsted Inspection August 2022:

Inspectors said –

“Children make good progress in stable and secure fostering families. This is because the agency carefully matches the children with their foster carers before they are placed.”

“Foster carers specifically receive training in therapeutic parenting, which is enhanced through reflective discussions with their supervising social worker.”

“The foster carers and the agency are very good at listening to children’s views in this respect and arrangements are always made in the children’s best interests.”

Children said –

“The place that I live is peaceful and calm, they are animal lovers, talkative, funny and happy.”

“(involved in) Many family activities such as going swimming, trips to the cinema, camping in the garden, swimming in the sea.”

A Local Authority Designated Officer said –

“There is efficiency of the agency in the notifications of safeguarding incidents, and the agency’s good practice in the communication of any concerns and referrals.”



Allegations against foster carers/staff

Allegations made by or on behalf of a child/young person be followed up via Safeguarding Procedures under 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and in line with safeguarding procedures for the local authority/trust. Foster carers are supported by Barnardo's during an allegation and encouraged to access support via their Fostering Network membership, or via independent support sourced by Barnardo's.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of a concern in the public interest that something is happening within Barnardo's that should not be, or not happening that should be. It is based on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). Barnardo's is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, accountability and practice and concerns can be raised via the Whistleblowing process.

Safecall is our Whistleblowing service provider, and their details are below. The link [here](#) also takes through how we handle any reports we receive. You can contact Safecall on 0800 915 1571 or online through the **'Report a Whistleblowing Concern'**. Your report won't be traced and Safecall has trained operators to support you. The service is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Other routes of complaint

Where a service is registered with an external body (e.g., Ofsted or Care Inspectorate), complainants may directly approach the relevant regulatory body. The regulatory body has the power to investigate the complaint itself or require Barnardo's or the relevant local authority / trust to do so.

Contact details:

**Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD**

Ofsted Information Helpline: **0300 123 1231**

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

You can also contact the Children's Commissioner
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



Regulation & Inspection

Barnardo's Fostering Services are regulated under the Children Act 1989, the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Fostering Services regulations 2011 and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 as amended by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

Barnardo's Fostering Services in England are registered and inspected as an independent fostering agency with Ofsted. Ofsted also receive and investigate any complaints about the fostering agency.

Significant Incidents are reported to Ofsted under Schedule 7 of the Care fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Fostering agencies are assessed at one of four levels:

OUTSTANDING

GOOD

REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

INADEQUATE



The last Ofsted inspection of North England Fostering was 'Good' in August 2022.

Contact details:
**Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD**

Ofsted Information Helpline: **0300 123 1231**
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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