



Cuffe  Lacey
A S S O C I A T E S

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2025



Care Connect Change

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Welcome to our Statement of Purpose. This statement is reviewed and updated annually to ensure it is a true reflection of the organisations current position. Cuffe and Lacey Fostering are committed to providing excellent services and support for all children, carers and Local Authorities we work with.

Version number: 6

Last reviewed: February 2025

Status and constitution

Cuffe and Lacey Fostering is an Independent Fostering Agency that was established in March 2020, and registered with Ofsted in June 2020; Ofsted Registration number: 2592566

The agency is regulated by Ofsted. Our registered manager is Chelsea Stanworth.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection took place on 12th December 2022 where we were found to be good in all areas. The report can be accessed using the below link:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/4/2592566>

Cuffe and Lacey Fostering is an owner managed fostering agency. The Directors are actively involved in the day to day business, and along with the Management Team meet on a regular basis to review and develop the following:

- Safeguarding
- Strategic Vision
- Financial Management and Performance
- Legal Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Policies and Procedures – our aim will be to work towards ISO 9001 accreditation
- Culture, Values and Vision – developing the service in line with best practice

Cuffe and Lacey Fostering's registered office is in Burnley, with an administrative office located in St Annes. The Burnley office is our base, however our staff mainly work from home.

Our panel takes place predominantly face to face at a suitable and convenient venue. We are also able to deliver online if needed. Our training is currently delivered predominantly online. We have delivered four face to face training sessions this year, with further sessions scheduled for the year ahead. We are aiming to deliver a mixture of face to face and online support groups to try and allow for foster carers with work commitments to attend. We deliver all supervisions with foster carers face to face except in exceptional circumstances.

The Agency is governed in accordance with:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) 2010
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Miscellaneous Amendments 2013
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3
- Staying Put: Arrangements for Care Leaves Age 18 Years and Above 2013
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- Children (Leaving Care) 2000

- Children Act 2004
- Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Planning Regulations 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Care Leavers (England) 2010
- Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
- Care Planning and Fostering (miscellaneous) (England) Regulations 2015
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2013
- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014)
- Getting the best from complaints: social care complaints and representations for children, young people and others

The agency will be active members of:

- Coram BAAF
- Fostering Network
- Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers

The agency will subscribe to:

- Fostering Network - for staff and foster carers

Our Team

Managing Director - Michelle Cuffe

Michelle is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England with over 40 years of experience. She has been a managing director of two successful fostering agencies, as well as having extensive experience in providing residential care for children. Michelle is a qualified Therapeutic Life Story Work Practitioner and trains other professionals delivering this work. Michelle acts as Panel Advisor and Agency Decision Maker and Second Vice Chair.

Director of Operations- Felicity Lacey

Felicity is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England with over 30 years of experience. She has been a managing director of a successful fostering agency, as well as having extensive experience in providing residential care for children. She has worked in inspection and regulation and has an excellent understanding of the regulatory framework within which fostering services operate. Felicity is a qualified Therapeutic Life Story Work Practitioner and trains other professionals delivering this work. Felicity acts as Agency Decision Maker and Panel Advisor.

The directors both play an active role within the agency and will act as social workers for foster carers, as well as overseeing and monitoring business performance, and attending national groups and forums.

Registered Manager – Chelsea Stanworth

Chelsea is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England, with over 20 years' experience of working with children and families, 19 of which are as a social worker. She has been a manager in a successful fostering agency, being responsible for quality assurance and practice development. Chelsea has also worked in a variety of social work teams, including children in care, child protection, court teams, child & adolescent mental health, permanence and fostering. Chelsea is a qualified Therapeutic Life Story Work Practitioner and trains professionals using this. Chelsea will act as social worker for foster carers when needed, as well as overseeing practice and quality assurance and attending national groups and forums. Chelsea acts as Panel Advisor and is a Stage 2 qualified Practice Educator, offering student placements within the organisation.

Finance

Our finance is overseen by Michelle Cuffe, our Managing Director. We also use a specialist for foster carer pay and use external accountants.

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Manager holds the NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety and has also completed the IOSH's Managing Safety

certificate. He will support the organisation and foster carers in health and safety checks and training.

HR and Administration

Our HR and Administration lead has extensive experience working within a fostering service and has completed a Masters in Human Resource Management. She oversees recruitment of staff, maintenance of files and supports the senior management team by providing monitoring information regarding the performance of the business. She will provide the administrative support to both the staff team and foster carers. She also oversees the marketing and social media presence to assist with recruitment of Foster Carers.

Supervising Social Worker

We employ a Supervising Social Worker, who regained her registration over the past 12 months whilst working with Cuffe and Lacey. She now supports a number of our foster carer families. She has over 15 years of experience working as part of a SENCO team in a primary school, and prior to this was registered as social worker, working as part of a local authority child protection team. She is currently completing hours in order to reregister as a social worker, and will then be a supervising social worker for foster carers and assessments.

Apprentice Social Worker

We have recently enrolled a staff member on a Social Work Apprentice Scheme. Within the next 12 months, she will begin supporting the fostering service as a Family Support Worker. Her background is in Advocacy and Children's Rights and she has extensive experience working with children and families.

Additional Services

We are specialists in Therapeutic Life Story Work and can offer this to the children with our foster carers. Where needed we would work with the local authorities to secure other therapeutic interventions for children.

Our office bases in Burnley and St Annes are able to offer rooms and supervision of family time arrangements, along with rooms being available for meetings.

We have access to expertise in a number of areas, including Children's Rights and Advocacy, along with workers who can offer additional targeted support to foster carers and children, where there is a specific need.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim at Cuffe and Lacey Fostering is to provide safe foster placements where children and young people can experience family life, thrive emotionally, acquire the skills necessary to achieve in education, be healthy, and participate and contribute positively to society.

In order to achieve our aims, our objectives are to:

- Recruit a diverse range of foster carers;
- Have a robust foster carer assessment process that ensures the agency of appropriately motivated, enthusiastic people who are committed to training and development;
- Provide appropriate support to our foster carers through regular visits, carers groups, continuous training and 24 hour on-call advice and support service;
- Provide regular supervision to our foster carers, review them at least annually and to undertake an unannounced visit each year;
- Ensure there are systems in place for the purposes of good matching of children, young people and their foster carers;
- Any gaps in skills or provision will be recorded and a plan agreed to demonstrate how this will be managed and supported;
- Work efficiently, openly and effectively with Local Authorities;
- Work with birth families and in line with the child's Plan;
- Be committed to continuous learning and improvement by listening to children, young people, foster carers, staff and other stakeholders to improve the service we provide;
- Have efficient and effective finance and administration systems;
- Have appropriately skilled, qualified and experienced staff;
- Treat all stakeholders fairly, without prejudice, openly and with respect;
- Be active members of Coram BAAF, Fostering Network, and the Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers.

The Agency is committed to working together with foster carers and all agencies to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people. In order to achieve the overall aim of the organisation, Cuffe and Lacey Fostering will adhere to the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011, Fostering Services Regulations 2011, the government agenda for children's social care and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

Visions and Values

Our visions and values are developed around three core themes; care, connect, change.

Care

- It is essential that foster carers receive relevant support services and development opportunities in order to provide the best care for children;
- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of our care;
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account;
- All children should be accepted as they are;
- Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent parenting and education;
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own children and have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.

Connect

- Every child should have their wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account;
- Children should be encouraged to form and express their own opinions, and be supported by foster carers and the agency to make their views known;
- Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth;
- Understanding the significance for children of spending time with their family, and ensuring foster carers and the agency are active in supporting relationships with birth parents and the wider family;
- The central importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and the foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child;
- Genuine partnership between all those involved in fostering children is essential to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the local authorities we work with social services departments, health services, education providers, commissioning teams, foster carer providers and foster carers.

Change

- We will have high aspirations and hopes for all of the children and young people in our care;
- Children should have a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills creating the opportunity to lead a successful adult life;
- Children should be cared for beyond their 18th birthday and should have the opportunity to remain with their foster carers should they wish to do so;

- We are committed to continually improving our practice through keeping up to date with current research;
- We will be active in local and national groups which represent foster carers and the essential services they provide to the most vulnerable children in society;
- We are committed to actively encouraging children and young people to help shape and develop the service.

What we do

Cuffe and Lacey Fostering provides foster placements to children and young people from birth up to their 18th birthday, along with parent and child placements (including those parents who are over 18 years). Cuffe and Lacey Fostering aims to provide safe fostering placements where children and young people's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.

To achieve this we will support children and young people:

- To be healthy;
- To stay safe;
- To thrive emotionally;
- To develop the skills necessary to achieve in education;
- To participate in society and fulfil their potential;
- To keep siblings together wherever possible;
- To prepare children for adulthood and support them to achieve economic wellbeing;
- To have choice and aspirations;
- To maintain links with their birth family;
- To be protected from all forms of exploitation.

How we do it

Working together with all parties

We work in genuine partnership with all people and agencies who form the team around the child. This includes all professionals, as well as the child's family. We will place the child at the centre of all of our decision making.

Recruitment and Approval

We recruit a diverse group of foster carers so that we can have people with a range of skills and experience who can care for children and young people. There are a number of stages in the assessment and approval process, which is thorough and detailed, to make sure the agency has appropriately motivated, enthusiastic people who are committed to continuous training and development.

The Process

All carers who are approved by the agency will go through the process highlighted on the following pages.

Initial Enquiry

This is the first time somebody contacts us about wanting to be a foster carer. Suitability and reasons for wanting to foster will be discussed.

Initial Visit

This is a visit to the applicants home where further discussions will take place. This will be done by two members of the agency, with at least one of these being a senior manager or director.

Assessment

If it is agreed an assessment will take place, a qualified social worker will be allocated, who will complete a comprehensive assessment with the prospective foster carer and their family.

The report produced at the end is called a Form F. There are two stages to this, which we run concurrently.

Stage 1 - a number of statutory checks will be done, which includes an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Stage 2 – A number of home visits will take place where a wide range of areas will be discussed in detail. The assessment is a two-way process and requires the participation of the applicants and their family members. As part of the assessment process, potential carers will be required to attend a training course called Skills to Foster. A Health and Safety check of the home will also be done, which includes an assessment of any pets, where this applies.

Approval

The panel members make recommendations regarding approval, with the final decision being made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Upon approval foster carers will have this confirmed in writing and a supervising social worker will be allocated.

Review

Every foster carer has a review of their suitability to be a foster carer. This takes place at least annually, but an earlier review might happen, for example if there have been significant changes in the family, or if there has an allegation against a foster carer. The supervising social worker will complete a review report which will include the positive things that have happened and any areas which might need some development. The support and training needs will also be explored.

Placements

- The matching process we have in place recognises that all children and young people are different and as a result the foster carers we have will need to reflect this.
- Approved foster carers will bring with them unique qualities, experiences and skills which will be built upon through support and training, enabling them to meet the varied needs of children who come into care.
- As part of our matching process of responding to enquiries and referrals, we will liaise closely with supervising social workers and foster carers, whilst also gaining all the available information from local authorities which will ensure that only those foster carers with the right skills are put forward as potential matches.
- Where foster carers are a good match but will need additional support, this will be discussed and agreed prior to a child being placed.
- Wherever possible we would want to gain information on the child's views of what is important to them and will consider diversity needs within the matching process.
- We have a matching form which assists us in gathering information and all foster carers will have a profile which can be shared with the social worker and the child.
- Psychological, emotional, identity, educational and health care needs are considered, met, monitored and promoted.
- The safeguarding and protection of children and young people are of primary concern.

Supporting carers

- Support to foster carers through regular visits, carer support groups, continuous professional development & training and by providing 24 hour on-call. Outside of office hours foster carers can contact an on-call social worker. The on-call service is supported by a manager.
- Access to therapeutic support and interventions for carers, children and young people.
- Supervised family time to assist with family time for children and young people and their birth families.

Listening to our carers and children

- Committed to continuous learning and improvement by listening to children, young people, foster carers, staff and other stakeholders, including developing a children's council to influence the development of the agency;
- Helping children make their views known and understand their rights.

Staffing

- Sufficient, skilled, qualified and experienced staff in positions throughout the organisation;
- Having effective and efficient finance and administration systems that support and enhance the social work service;
- Having robust recruitment processes throughout the organisation which ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded.

Quality Assurance

- Quality monitoring systems in place to ensure consistent and safe practice throughout the organisation;
- Outcomes and progress for children and young people are monitored;
- Practice, policies and procedures reviewed in line with new research, legislation, feedback from staff, professionals, carers and children.

Safeguarding

- Robust safeguarding that is threaded through everything we do, ensuring the delivery of safe child-centred care with comprehensive and robust safeguarding systems;
- All staff and foster carers fully trained and up to date on safeguarding practices;
- Our Safeguarding, Missing from Care and Exploitation policies are updated in line with regulations, research and advice;
- Allegations and incidents are managed in line with our child protection and safeguarding duties and responsibilities.

Compliments and Complaints

We welcome feedback and opportunities for learning in a variety of ways. We have separate processes for the purposes of complaints, allegations, concerns around standards of care and practice, compliments, and suggestions. This information and processes are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the registered manager and the senior management team.

The Procedure

We have a comprehensive complaints procedure within in our Foster Carer Handbook, which places an emphasis on resolving complaints at the lowest level possible and in a timely manner. Where complaints cannot be resolved we have a staged resolution process.

Stage 1 – this will generally be addressed by the supervising social worker, with managers being aware. Any learning points will be recorded and shared with the team, respecting the confidentiality of the complainant.

Stage 2 – this will be dealt with by a manager and a plan for information gathering will be made; this might include further discussions and meetings. The timescale for resolving the complaint is 28 days.

Stage 3 – If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, this will be looked at again by the Managing Director to see what has been done so far to deal with the complaint. This may need more information gathering. At this stage it may be referred to an independent person, or in the case of a complaint against a foster carer, may be referred to the fostering panel.

Stage 4 - If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they may contact Ofsted, this is the government body responsible for the regulation and inspection of Independent Fostering Agencies. Ofsted will consider the powers it has to deal with your complaint and may wish to involve another agency, such as the Local Authority Commissioners, who contract with Cuffe and Lacey Fostering. Ofsted can be contacted at any time by foster carers and children and young people if they wish to do so. They can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Independent Review Mechanism

The panel process also gives all potential and current foster carers the option to request an Independent Review, via the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), when they do not agree with decisions regarding their approval, or terms of approval, made by the fostering Panel and Independent Decision Maker. Details about this process is contained with our Foster Carers handbook and information can be accessed at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/independent-review-mechanism

Services available for children

Services available:

- Support to access full health and education services including those providing emotional support
- Educational support and assistance, through support in school, and alternative arrangements for excluded pupils
- Children and Young Peoples Guides to Fostering
- Permanency preparation
- Leaving care advice, information and support from the agency
- Family time arrangements with families in our centre
- Access to national organisations for 'looked after' children and young people
- Joining Participation Groups to develop services
- Access to Therapeutic Life Story Work

Services we provide for carers

- A designated supervising Social Worker, in regular and flexible contact
- Access to 24 hour duty support, every day of the year
- Support groups
- Therapeutic advice and support for carer
- Educational advice and support for carers
- Regular payments
- Festival and birthday allowances included within their regular payments
- A fortnight's paid respite allowance per year
- Paid membership of Fostering Network, including access to their legal advice line.

Guidance and resources:

- Online Foster Carers' Handbook
- A website providing information and advice for foster carers
- A resource library for foster carers.
- Membership to Fostering Network

Training and development:

- All carers attend 'Skills to Foster' prior to approval
- Comprehensive post-approval training programme for foster carers and an expectation that carers will attend those that are deemed beneficial to their CPD.
- Access to online training through The Fostering Training Hub
- Online Foster Carers' Handbook
- A website providing information and advice for foster carers
- A resource library for foster carers.

Services we provide for local authorities

Placements we offer:

- Short Term foster placements
- Sibling Group foster placements
- Emergency foster placements
- Long Term or Permanent foster placements
- Foster placements for children and young people with Special Needs and/or learning/physical disability
- Respite foster placements
- Solo foster placements
- Foster placements for Asylum Seeking children and young people
- Placements for children with sexually harmful behaviours
- Parent and child: P&C offers will include parenting assessment, arrangements to support parents who are over 18 years, parents who are looked after themselves and parents whose children are looked after. The placement aims and objectives will be carefully agreed as part of the placement process and in line with the Local Authority's plan of care.

Services:

- Supervision of family time arrangements at our centre;
- Therapeutic Life Story Work;
- Staying Put arrangements;
- Social Work support;
- Identifying other therapeutic interventions;
- A range of assessments including parent and child.

Contact us

Registered Office

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Head Office

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Visit our Website:

Website: | www.cuffeandlacey.com

Social Media: | facebook.com/cuffeandlaceyfostering

This statement of purpose is provided to and made available to all stakeholders who work with Cuffe and Lacey Fostering and can be accessed via our website www.cuffeandlacey.com or hard copy format can be requested from our offices. The statement of purpose is reviewed at least annually by the Directors and Senior Management Team.

Where a foster carer or child has particular communication requirements this statement of purpose will be made available through alternative formats.