



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

CYPS Scrutiny
Cabinet

7th December 2010
13th December 2010

Statement of Purpose Fostering Service

Report of Andy Smith, Divisional Director, Social Care & Safeguarding

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Local Authority as the registered provider for a fostering service is required to produce an annual Statement of Purpose for approval. The Local Authority is required under statutory regulations to have a Statement of Purpose for its Fostering Service, which is revised and reviewed on an annual basis.
The statement of purpose is written to inform all stakeholders in the service of Leicester City's function, structure and processes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 For Cabinet to receive the report and approve the Statement of Purpose as attached at Appendix 1 in accordance with National minimum standard.1.3 'The registered provider' (in the case of a local authority, the elected members) formally approves the statement of purpose of the fostering service.

3. Background

- 3.1 Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2002 require each fostering provider to produce a statement of purpose. This includes the aims and objectives of the service, details staff working in the service and outlines fostering services provided. This is an important statement and is scrutinised as part of the Ofsted inspection process. A full copy of this statement is attached to this document at Appendix 1.

4. Report

- 4.1 Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 requires every fostering service provider to compile a written Statement of Purpose which

shall consist of:

- (a) a statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service; and
- (b) a statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the fostering service. This includes:

- Aims of The Fostering service
- Principles and Standards of Care
- Management Structures
- Service Provided by the service
- Services for Young people
- Services for carers
- Procedure for recruiting, approving, training, supporting and reviewing foster carers
- Kinship
- Foster carers development, support and supervision
- Complaints.

Regulation 4 requires that the Statement of Purpose be kept under review and revised where appropriate.

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering (NMS) which accompany the regulations require that the registered provider [in the case of a Local Authority, the elected members] formally approves the Statement of Purpose of the fostering service, and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary at least annually.

- 4.2 The Statement of Purpose supports the Council's key outcomes in relation to children and families as set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan. The Fostering Service is fully supported by all Council Services and partner agencies, which including Learning Services, Leisure and Health Services.
- 4.3 The service is committed to working alongside and in support of carers to promote the highest level of health, education and wellbeing for all our looked after children to ensure that the 5 objectives of Every Child Matters are promoted for children in the care of Leicester City Council and the Children & Young Peoples Strategic Partnerships.
- 4.4 The outcome of audit in relation to the Children's Pledge will inform the continuous improvement in the service design and delivery.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications which arise directly as a consequence of this report. - Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Investing in our Children, ext. 29 7750

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications relating to this report.
Kamal Adatia, Legal Services.

5.3 Climate Change Implications

None

Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph/References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Entire report
Policy	Yes	Entire report
Sustainable and Environmental	N/A	
Crime and Disorder	N/A	
Human Rights Act	Yes	Entire report
Elderly/People on Low Income	N/A	
Corporate Parenting	Yes	Entire report
Health Inequalities Impact	N/A	

6. Background Papers

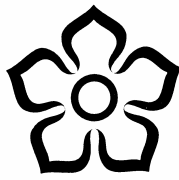
Fostering Regulations 2002
Fostering National Minimum Standards 2002

7. Report Author

Cheriel O'Neill
Head of Service Children's Resources
Tel. 0116 2565213 / 35 5213
Email cheriel.oneill@leicester.gov.uk

Andy Smith
Divisional Director
Social Care & Safeguarding
Tel. 0116 2528306 / 29 8306
Email andy.smith@leicester.gov.uk

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



Leicester
City Council

Fostering Service

Children and Young People's Services

Statement of Purpose & Function July 2010

1 Introduction

This Statement of Purpose and Function explains the range of Fostering Services provided by Leicester City Children and Young People's Services, and the management arrangements that are in place to ensure a good quality and effective service is provided to the young people we look after.

The Statement of Purpose and Function is a requirement of the National Minimum Fostering Standards (and Regulations) 2002, and is available for information to staff of the organisation, foster carers and young people placed with carers on request.

The Fostering Service, referred to in the Statement, is within the management of the Social Care and Safeguarding Division within the organisation of Leicester City Council.

2 Aims of the Fostering Service

Primary Aim

The primary aim of the Fostering Service is to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people, (while being looked after by foster carers) enabling them to reach their full potential by providing safe, quality family placements.

Additionally our aim is to:

- Meet the full range of standards and requirements as set out in the National Minimum Standards (Foster Care 2002).
- Provide comprehensive support to the carers who look after our children and young people, many of whom have complex needs.
- To provide a high level of supervision to ensure our carers are able to provide a safe and nurturing environment.
- Work in partnership with other parents, family members, significant others (where appropriate) and other agencies to secure positive change for the young people.
- Continually improve the service in consultation with key people, particularly young people and carers.

3 Objectives of the Service

- To ensure that all staff and foster carers work to achieve the Outcomes of Every Child Matters
- To provide a safe caring, healthy and nurturing environment for all Looked After Children through assessment, supervision and support of all foster carers
- To provide appropriate matches of carers to young people's needs and additionally the services required to supervise and support, to ensure the placement is effective and appropriate.
- Children and young people living in substitute families have the right to stability and permanence. Strategies and plans will be developed by all involved in the child's life to assist establish, or maintain permanence and to prevent placement disruption.

4 Principles and Standards of Care we aspire to

Principles

- i) The Fostering Service, as part of the Leicester City Council works to the principles of the Children Act 1989, that the "*welfare of children is paramount*" and that there are unique advantages for children experiencing family life in their own birth family and, in most circumstances, children's needs are best met by being cared for within their families. Those children unable to live within their birth families (or appropriate friends) have a right to proper care within a substitute family in most instances.
- ii) The circumstances of children and their individual social, health and educational needs should be assessed before any placement is made, including risks to themselves or others. Placement decisions should reflect these assessed needs.
- iii) Children have the right to be consulted and their views given appropriate consideration in any placement decisions, provision will be made to ensure this occurs.
- iv) Young people who are placed in the service should not be disadvantaged or stigmatised by virtue of their race, language, culture, religion, gender, ability or sexuality. The Service will always consider these needs when matching carers and placing children. The Service operates to the Equality Policy of Leicester City Council, which is available on request.
- v) Looked after children have the right to expect high quality, safe, day-to-day care within the context of a clear, overall plan.
- vi) Children should not 'drift' in care. Social Workers and Foster Carers should prepare children for reunification with parents or extended family, permanence or independence.
- vii) The Local Authority has a responsibility to protect looked after children from harm, or from harming others, and policies within the service reflect those agreed by the local Children's Safeguarding Board.

Standards

The Fostering Service ensures that its practices comply with those set out in the National Minimum Standards (and Regulations 2002). Also The Fostering Services (Amendment) Regulations 2009 and The Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) Regulations 2009. To comply with the standards, a set of policies, procedures and guidance documents are available which clearly inform the way in which the standards inform day-to-day practice.

Where children /young people are placed in independent foster care placements standards will be monitored by the Commissioning Service and Team Manager.

A copy of the Foster Care Standards is provided to all foster carers.

In order to ensure foster carers have full information on children and to assist in matching children to carers, the Fostering Service will require a range of records and information including a risk assessment from the placing social worker before a placement is made.

Foster Carers will all have a 'Foster Care Agreement' with the Foster Care Service, on approval. This will be renegotiated, when changes are made to the carer's terms of approval.

5 Management Structure

The Fostering Service is the responsibility of Leicester City Children and Young People's Service and managed by:

Service Director, Andy Smith (0116 252 8306)

Head of Service, Cheriell O'Neill (0116 256 5213)

The Service Manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the service is Mark Tingley, (0116 2995876). A copy of the management structure is detailed in Appendix A. In absence of the Service Manager (Fostering Service) the Service Manager for Residential Care (Children and Young People) will deputise for the Service.

The Fostering Service employs 4 team managers, 23 supervising social workers including a temporary post dedicated to the recruitment of short breaks carers and 4 senior practitioners, a fostering development officer, an enquiry officer and a recruitment and publicity officer. A dedicated administrative team support and manage the following services

Assessment and Recruitment Team

Penni Barwany is the Team Manager responsible for the team, having a MA in Social Work Qualification and 14 years experience in social work.

Short Term Team

Teresa Selby is the Team Manager responsible for this team, having a Diploma in Social Work qualification and 38 years experience in social work.

Kinship Care Team

Georgina Oreffo is the Team Manager responsible for this team, having a Diploma in Social Work qualification and 25 years experience in social work.

Permanence Team

Mel Aked is the Team Manager responsible for this team, having a Diploma in Social Work and 27 years experience in social work.

The team's social workers have considerable experience in social work (and other work backgrounds) ranging from newly qualified to 38 years.

Additionally, the service employs a number of staff who support the day-to day running of the service:

- Administrative staff (x 4.5 full time)
- Development officer/trainer (x 1)
- Publicity Co-coordinator (x 1)
- Enquiry Officer (x 1)

The Fostering Service recruits, assesses and approves new foster carers.

The Fostering Service maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that support the management of the Service, the care of children and advice/guidance/protocols to foster carers. This manual is available to all staff and will be available for Child Care Teams and other relevant childcare staff.

6 The Services provided by the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service provides family placements for children and young people of the ages from birth up to and including the age of 18 years. Some young people who are aged 18 may continue to be placed within a family placement if their assessment of need (and legal status) recommends that continuing support for the young person is required into their young adult life. Any transition to another placement, return home or independent living post 16/17 years of age, will be part of their planning process to ensure appropriate services are offered.

The Fostering Service provides placements for children and young people from varying ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

The Fostering Service provides placements for the following

- Placements for babies and young children
- Disabled children.
- Children with severe disabilities and/or medical needs and who might need adapted accommodation
- Children and young people with a range of complex needs
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people
- Under 18 parent and baby placements

The Fostering Service is located at Eagle House, 11 Friar Lane, and Leicester, LE1 5RB. There is a Foster Care and Adoption reception service located on the ground floor of Eagle House. This is open to the public, who want to find out about fostering and adoption, and to existing foster carers and adopters.

Opening times

9.00 am – 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday

9.00 am – 4.00 pm, Friday.

Additionally current carers can access the reception service should they need to speak to a duty social worker.

All of the social work teams/managers in the service are located at Eagle House.

The Fostering Service provides the following range of placements and services

- **Emergency placements** initially provided for 24 hours and up to 5 working days in view of returning young people to their previous or alternative placement. Some placements may continue to be provided for a short-term

period (where the care plan agrees this assessment, and the carer is registered and approved for such placements).

- **Short-term placements** that meet the care plan for the young person, to enable the young person to return home or to an alternative placement within a short time-scale. Flexibility of care is a significant feature in ensuring success in moving children on to appropriate next placements and at an appropriate time in consideration of the child's needs/circumstances.
- **Permanent placements** where the child's care plan is permanency, within foster care.
- **Kinship Foster Care** – this service is where relatives or friends are approved for specific named children. The length of the placement will vary dependent on whether permanency is achieved through another legal route (i.e. Residence Order) or a return to parent.
- **Family Link Scheme** – this service is designed to give flexible breaks to parents/carers of moderate to severely disabled children who are assessed as needing a planned series of short term breaks
- **Respite Care** this service gives support to birth and care families by providing time limited overnight stays for children and young people to maintain children in their main family base.
- **Contract care placements** - this service is provided to children and young people who require an intensive level of support over and above the other services, young people will have had their care plan considered and agreed by the Department's "Placement Decision Group" to access this service. These carers are self-employed, and work within a six-month contracting arrangement this group of children. The contract care scheme is currently under review, to ensure that its specifications meet the changing needs of the Looked After children
- **Remand care** – this service is not directly the responsibility of the Children and Young People's Services however there is a partnership agreement with the Youth Offending Service to provide placements for young people, who have been involved in criminal activity. One full-time and one part-time qualified social worker, which are managed by a Youth Offending Team Manager, are responsible for supervising and supporting the remand foster carers within this service. How this service is provided is currently under review.
- **Private Fostering assessments** - Assessments, support and advice to carers who care for children within private fostering arrangements
- **Assessment and Support Plans for Special Guardianship** – the service contributes to the assessment and development of special guardianship support plans, where the foster carer seeks to, or does obtain a Special Guardianship Order on a child for whom they are caring.

The Fostering Service also provides a range of services/facilities to support the work that the social work team and carers undertake. These include:

6.1 For young people

- Children's Guides for children and young people about the foster care service.
- Access to primary mental health workers for young people who require assessment/services with regard to their behavioural/emotional needs.

- Access to a team of professionals whose remit it is to raise the educational needs of looked after children (RALAC team) and secure appropriate educational arrangements for the young people either in mainstream or specialist provision
- A dedicated health team advising and implementing a health care programme to support the general health and well being of children looked after in foster care.
- Liaison with and services available to young people who are preparing to leave care to live as independently as possible and secure employment/training into adulthood.
- Leisure activities: - All foster carers are provided with: A free sports pass for use in all city swimming pools and other sports facilities and a youth worker is available for young people aged 11years and over to promote take-up of leisure/sporting activities amongst Looked After Children.
- A dedicated Children and Young Peoples Rights and Participation Service for looked after children ensures young people know and understand their rights when being looked after and offers advice, assistance and advocacy in having their views heard, and/or in making complaints. A regular newsletter is sent to all looked after children, by the service and opportunities for the young people to meet together.
- Opportunities are also provided through initiatives arising from the work of the Corporate Parenting Forum, these can include free cycle maintenance and riding courses, free access to museum activities, work experience and apprenticeship scheme, job interview practice.
- Independent visitors: - This scheme enables children and young people who do not have visits from their parents or extended family (or a significant adult) to be matched to approved people whose role is to visit children in care, including foster care. This service is available if it is agreed that it is in the child's best interest, and a suitable visitor can be matched to the child.
- A range of equipment is provided or loaned to the carer to meet the assessed needs of children & young people in placement.
- Child and Family Support Team to provide appropriate direct work and support to maintain placement stability.

6.2 For Carers

The following services are provided to foster carers:

- A named, allocated supervising social worker, with a duty system backup in absence of a worker.
- 24-hour on-call system, staffed by qualified social workers. In the daytime this is provided by the Foster Care Service, after 5.00 pm – 8.30 am by the Emergency Duty Team of Leicester City (Leicestershire County/Rutland), and a 24 hour support line run by the Leicester Foster Care Association, which is available to all foster carers
- A comprehensive Foster Care Handbook is provided to all approved foster carers.
- The Foster Care Service identifies activities during school holidays that meet the needs of a range of children/young people in foster care.
- Contract foster carers receive 4 weeks' paid leave per year, in view of their specialist function.

- An ongoing training programme linked to carers' accreditation from the point of approval to Level 5 and contract care. This includes access to the NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People's Award. Significant progress has been made to ensure the Children's Workforce Development Council Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster care are implemented by April 2011.
- Development and support group sessions for carers and briefing sessions on key issues that are likely to affect them or the service due to national/local change.
- The Foster Care Service may decide after further assessment of a situation that some young people with complex needs require additional support. Therapeutic services are offered by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and the Child and Family Support Team
- Fees are paid to the Leicester Foster Care Association (support for foster carers). An introduction to the LFCA and how it can support carers is detailed in the "Foster Care Handbook" which is given to all approved carers of the foster placement service. Additionally, the Foster Care Service funds an advice and information service to carers through the Fostering Network.

7 The Procedures for Recruiting, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Carers

7.1 Recruitment and Approval of Carers

Appendix D shows the process of recruitment through to approval.

Mainstream

- i) The Fostering Service has a dedicated publicity officer who discusses the recruitment initiatives required, with Team Managers and the Service Manager of the Service. These initiatives are planned to ensure recruitment is focused on the areas where there is the greatest need i.e. long-term placements, sibling groups, teenagers, disabled children respite and long-term, and dual heritage Black/Asian children.
- ii) Recruitment of carers is always planned on a timely basis to maximise the public's interest in considering being a foster carer, therefore the foster care service usually targets specific times of year, specific areas of the City and events happening in the City.
- iii) The Fostering Service has an enquiry service working from Eagle House completed by the enquiry officer. Potential applicants can call in person or by phone to request information. An information pack is sent to them within 24 hours. The enquiry officer does some doing outreach work to black community groups within the city.
- iv) Once someone has expressed an interest in becoming a carer and returned the application form, an invitation is sent to the applicant to the next **information evening** (held monthly). Here they will get the opportunity to hear about the Fostering Service, meet current carers and ask questions about becoming a foster carer. If the applicant still wishes to continue, they will be

visited by social workers from the recruitment and assessment team to discuss their interest, complete an initial assessment proforma and a basic health and safety check of the home.

- v) If the initial assessment is positive and demonstrates that the carers are likely to have sufficient space, and time, to foster, they will be placed on a waiting list for the next available preparation training course and also receive a series of visits by a qualified social worker to complete a full assessment. This might take 3-4 months of approximately 8 visits. A specific form (**Form F**) is used for assessment and is competency based.
- vi) The Department will also carry out Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, probation, CAF/CASS, health visitor/schools references (if have children) and character references. Applicants have to have full health assessments completed by their own GP.
- vii) Once the assessment is complete the social worker will write a report, which is read and signed by the applicant. The report is submitted to a Fostering Panel whose task it is to consider the approval of foster carers. At the panel, all members will have read the reports. Prospective carers and a social worker will attend the panel. Foster carers can only be carers for one fostering provider. viii) The panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker and where foster carers are approved, a letter of approval detailing the terms on which the carer is approved will be sent i.e. children's ages; gender; the number of placements, and the type of placement. The carer will also be sent:

Foster Carer Agreement

Foster Carer Handbook

Complaints and Access to Records

A copy of the National Minimum Standards

A copy of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002

Leaflet on the function of the Independent Review Mechanism

Fostering Network leaflets on record keeping, insurance, contact, regulations and guidance.

Letter to carer starting in business.

Notification details

RALAC Information

Children's guides according to carer's approval.

Application form for Leicester City Council swimming passes

Leaflets for Library access.

Copy of Fostering Training Newsletter and Diary

Continuing Professional Development Folder

- ix) After approval, responsibility for the carer's support and supervision will remain with the assessing social worker for a short period and then be transferred to a supervising social worker from the Short Term Team or the Permanence Team.

Kinship

- (i) The Service Manager, Fieldwork Service, may agree to an immediate placement under Regulations 38 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 following a viability assessment completed by the child care social worker. The child care social worker will inform the kinship care team of an immediate placement, if made. This will trigger a foster payment, and an assessment by the kinship care social worker.
- (ii) A family member may be identified as a possible future foster carer for a specific child (ren) by a social worker and will be referred for assessment by the Kinship care team.
- (iii) A form F (2) for a named child (ren) will be submitted to the Fostering Panel.
- (iv) Following Panel recommendation and approval by the Agency Decision Maker, a letter of approval detailing the terms on which the carer is approved will be sent i.e. children's ages; gender; the number of placements, and the type of placement. The carer will also be sent:

Foster Carer Agreement

Foster Carer Handbook

Complaints and Access to Records

A copy of the National Minimum Standards

A copy of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002

Leaflet on the function of the Independent Review Mechanism

Fostering Network leaflets on record keeping, insurance, contact, regulations and guidance.

Letter to carer starting in business.

Notification details

RALAC Information

Children's guides according to carer's approval.

Application form for Leicester City Council swimming passes

Leaflets for Library access.

Copy of Fostering Training Newsletter and Diary

After approval, responsibility for the carer's support and supervision may remain with the assessing social worker, or be transferred to a supervising social worker from the in the Kinship Care team.

Foster Carers Development, Support and Supervision

- i) Matching of children to carers is carefully undertaken from both the child and the carer profiles on the placement desk, and for children needing long-term placements by the family finding worker.
- ii) The foster carers are also supported by supervising social workers throughout the time of the placement of children in their care by phone and visits. Supervising social workers also have a responsibility to monitor the standard of care that carers provide. Supervising social workers have experience in supporting and advising carers on a range of matters that might be about children's behaviour, contact visits from parents/families, at risk behaviour,

finance, legal matters etc. Carers can ring supervising social workers directly, the Placements Desk or Appropriate Team Managers if there is an urgent matter. Out of hours the Emergency Duty Team, provide an emergency advice. If any carers find themselves subject to a serious allegation by a child in their care, the Foster Care Service, while having due regard for the child's best interests, will also ensure appropriate support is provided to the carer(s) throughout any investigation.

- iii) Foster Carers are reviewed annually. The first review conducted within the first year of approval is also submitted to the Fostering Panel, which will decide on the terms of their approval.

The Foster Care Panel has the powers to recommend that:

- (a) Carers can continue to look after children as previously approved.
- (b) Their approval can be altered – either an increase/decrease in numbers of children, or type of placement.
- (c) They can also recommend that the carer's approval should be terminated. Where this is the case, the Fostering Panel follows a specific procedure. Further details on the approval and review of foster carers can be requested from the Fostering Service, (contact details in section 6.4)

Carers professional development

- i) All carers will discuss their development and training needs with their supervising social workers. An annual training plan is produced by the service, and newsletters are regularly sent to all carers detailing courses available. There is a dedicated development/training officer, who co-ordinates training for the Fostering Service. There are also joint training opportunities for foster carers to attend training with supervising social workers and residential social workers.
- iii) The carers annual review will highlight all courses undertaken and in specific circumstances those that might be required to be undertaken to maintain the carers approval, and to develop carers knowledge and skills.
- iv) Each carer has his/her own Training and Development File so they can build up a portfolio of training, specific work or research study they have undertaken,
- v) Continuing professional development groups are also held in carers homes, where they have the opportunity to discuss specific practice issues
- vi) The CWDC training development and support standards for foster carers has been introduced for all new carers from 1 April 2008.

8 The Children's Guide(s) to the Fostering Service(s)

All children who are placed in a foster home, will receive a booklet which informs them of what the service is for, what it might feel like to live in another family home, the services that children/young people can expect from a foster carer (and the service) and what to do if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. Three booklets are available for differing age ranges/reading abilities and types of placement and reviewed regularly, with young people, to ensure the details are updated.

A copy of the children's guide should also be available to carers of young people, their parents/social workers on request. The range of matters detailed in the children's booklet is based on best practice, expected standards and the principle of the Children's Act 1989 – the welfare of the child is paramount.

Copies of this booklet can be obtained on request from the reception service at Eagle House:

Fostering Team	Telephone: 0116 299 5800
Eagle House	
11 Friar Lane	
Leicester	
LE1 5RB	

9 Safeguarding Children

The Fostering Service, as part of the Local Authority adheres to all the policies and procedures of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board in keeping children safe and responding to enquiries of concern when children are thought to be at risk. The Fostering Service will ensure their staff listen to every concern that is raised with them about the care of children who are placed in its service. If there are general concerns about children's care, this can be dealt with by using the complaints procedure of Leicester City Council. If it is about the welfare or treatment of children physically; sexually, emotionally or neglectful care, the Children and Young People's Services will initiate enquiries and decide what the plan of investigation will be.

- If the matters of concern are about the foster carers, or that of their family or siblings, there is a procedure within the Fostering Service to inform carers (at an appropriate time) of any allegations made about them and what is likely to happen. This procedure is also laid out in the 'Foster Care Handbook' for all carers, and for staff in the staff procedure manual (copies can be requested from the Fostering Services).
- Foster carers will receive support from the Foster Care Service/Leicester Foster Care Association. Children will be supported by social workers, Children's Rights Officer, Independent Visitor, family, as appropriate.
- The placement of the child (other children) will be carefully considered during all stages of the investigation and subsequently when the outcome of the investigation is known.

- Children and carers and relevant others will be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
- The Fostering Service works closely with the placing social workers of the children the Safeguarding Unit and relevant others, i.e. police, to co-operate with any investigation and ensure records are kept of all complaints/allegations made and their outcomes. The service will be aware of any trends/patterns that emerge with particular children/carers/or the organisation, when evaluating complaints on an annual basis.

General Complaints

- There is a separate procedure for children/others to make general complaints about their care in the carer's home or about the services of the Fostering Service. This procedure can be requested from the Foster Care Service at Eagle House or the Complaints Manager (Children). Children themselves will receive information about making complaints. Foster carers are aware of the need to take the time to talk to young people about this, so young people feel they can openly discuss their concerns.
- There are three stages to the complaints procedure. Stage 1 will involve the foster care manager responding to the complaint. Stage 2 complaints are investigated by a person who is independent of the Council. Stage 3 is an independent panel which reviews the Stage 2 investigation. There are timescales to meet when investigating complaints; these are recorded in the complaints procedure. If after Stage 3 is complete, the complainant is not satisfied, they may then refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Where it is appropriate, the parents of children (or legal guardian) will be informed of any complaint/allegation made and the outcome and their views considered. Parents/family members, friends or advocates can act on behalf of a child to make a complaint about the Fostering Service or the child/young person can ask the Children's Rights and Participation Service to support them.

Safe Caring Policy

Each family will have a Safe caring Policy, and bedroom risk assessment completed prior to approval, and regularly reviewed. The Safe Caring Policy aims to reduce risks to all family members and the Looked after child.

All carers will be trained on child safeguarding procedures.

All investigations that are held where there is a substantiated allegation of abuse made about a carer will be reported to the Ofsted, as outlined in the Foster Care Standards and Regulations (Regulation 43).

10 Monitoring the Quality of the Service

The Fostering Service is monitored (and inspected) by a number of qualified professionals:

- Foster carers receive at least one unannounced visit a year to their home by the supervising social worker, and a minimum six monthly supervisory visit. A proforma for both the visits is used. Carers will sign these records and retain a copy.
- The Service Manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the Foster Care Service, monitors a range of matters identified in the National Minimum Foster Care Standards and Regulations (2002) to ensure the standards are adhered to and the service is developing to meet the needs of a range of children.
- Inspectors from Ofsted inspect the Local Authority's Foster Care Service's premises and management arrangements according to requirements laid down by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and can contact and/or inspect foster care homes unannounced.
- Complaints made about the Service, including carers, are monitored on an annual basis; this also includes any allegations made about staff/carers. The current number of complaints and their outcomes is documented in Appendix C and updated on a quarterly basis. Compliments will also be recorded and reported on.

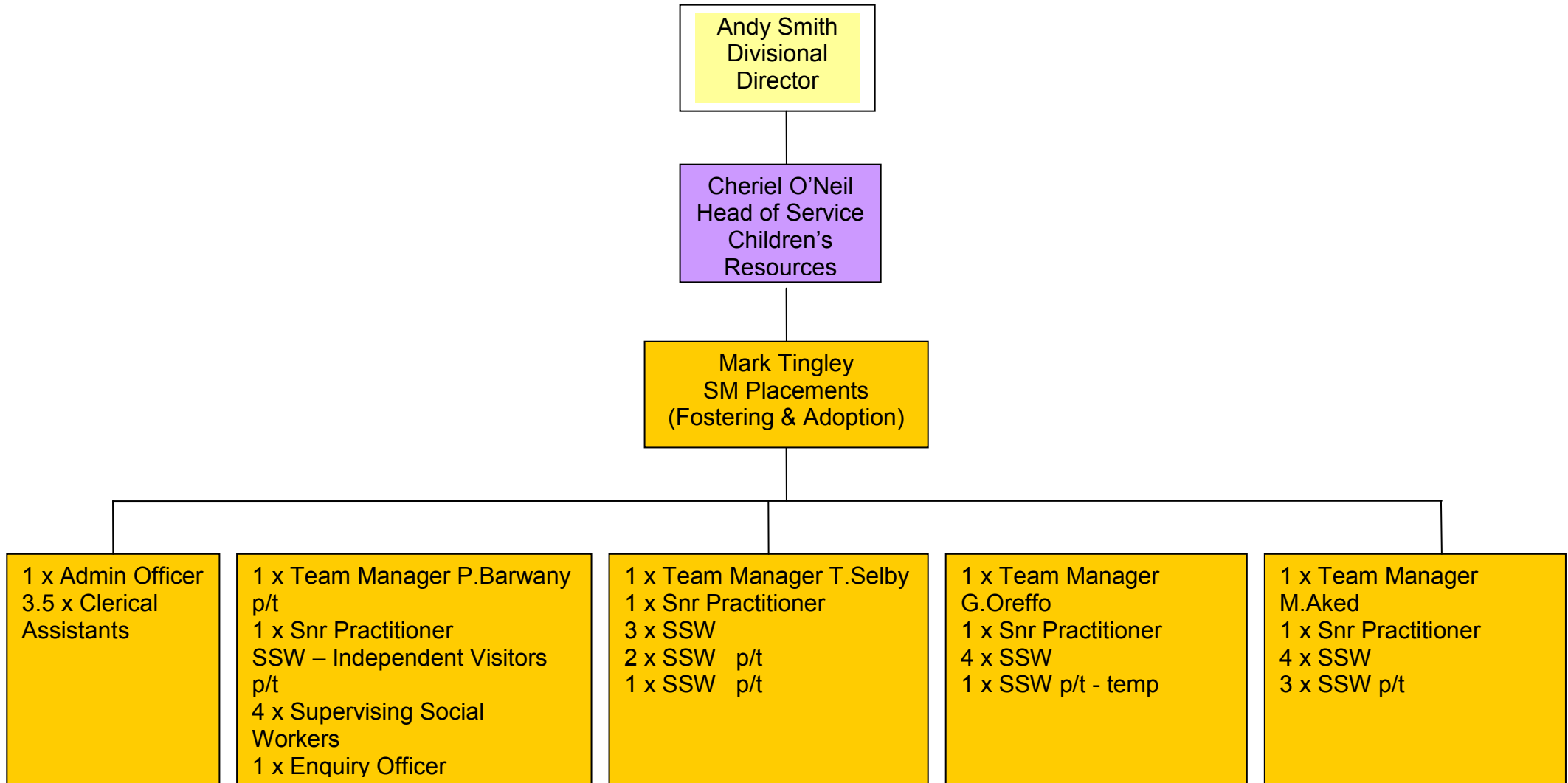
11 Review of the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose & Function

The Fostering Service will review the Statement of Purpose & Function on an annual basis to ensure its aims, objectives, services and facilities provided - remain appropriate to the care of children and young people. Any review of the Statement of Purpose and subsequent changes will be notified to Ofsted, carers and relevant others on request within 28 days of any change, and will have the approval of the Council's Elected Members.

Ofsted, National Business Unit Royal Exchange Building St Ann's Square, Manchester M27LA	Telephone: 08456 404040
The Children and Young People's Rights service Ground Floor, B Block New Walk Centre Leicester LE1 6ZG	Telephone: 0116 252 8409 and 07976848391 Email childrensrights@leicester.gov.uk
The Foster Care Service Eagle House 11 Friar Lane Leicester LE1 5RB	Telephone: 0116 299 5810 Fax: 0116 233 6053
Leicester Foster Care Association 10/12 Hoball Close New Parks Leicester LE3 6QW	Telephone: 0116 232 2173 Mobile: 07958587443

NEXT REVIEW: July 2011

APPENDIX A - STRUCTURE OF FOSTERING SERVICE



APPENDIX B

Profile of the Foster Care Service

(Leicester City Children and Young People's Service)

As of 31st March 2010 the Foster Care Service has:

- 161 carers and 65 Kinship carers providing a range of placements described on pages 5 & 6.
- Children and young people are placed with carers, in addition a further 38 children regularly use the Family Link Scheme.

APPENDIX C

Formal complaints received into the Foster Care Service

During 2009/2010 (to date) the following complaints have been received by the fostering service: -

Children and young people	none
Foster carer	one (upheld)
Child / Young persons family	one (upheld)
Other i.e.) public, MP, etc.	one (currently under investigation)

All complaints made about the fostering service are referred to the Complaints Manager (Children) where these are recorded. Statistical data concerning complaints are submitted to Ofsted on an annual basis.

APPENDIX D

Process For Prospective Foster Carers

Target Times:

1 Working Day

