

**Fostering**

**Statement of Purpose**

**2024 – 2025**

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**The Fostering Service**

**Statement of Purpose 2024/25**

Introduction

The Statement of Purpose is the means of providing information about Suffolk County Council’s Fostering Service in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the Fostering Services Regulations (2011).

The Statement of Purpose is a source of information for prospective foster carers, foster carers registered with Suffolk County Council, Fostering Services staff and all other colleagues or professionals working within Suffolk County Council and partnership agencies.

The Office for the Standards in Children’s Services & Skills (Ofsted) has the responsibility to regularly inspect the Fostering Service to ensure that we achieve the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Our most recent inspection report can be located at [www.ofsted.gov.uk. O](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/)fsted can be contacted directly by telephone 08456 404045 or by email at [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk o](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)r in writing to:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street

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For all enquiries about becoming a foster or Link carer, call 01473 264800 or email: [fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk)

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**Why foster for Suffolk County Council?**

By becoming part of the Suffolk County Council Fostering Service, you will be contributing to the provision of high-quality placements, which give best value to Suffolk communities. We will provide support from our highly experienced team of staff, access to a wide range of training to develop your knowledge and expertise and a tiered payment scheme which reflects the complexity of the children who need placements and the skills you offer. We will treat you with the respect that you deserve as a professional foster carer.

**Foster East**

Suffolk Fostering Service are part of Foster East, which was launched in May 2024. Suffolk have joined with 10 other local authorities responsible for Children's Services in the East of England to work together to deliver Foster East. Funded by the Department of Education, Foster East is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support. Every individual will be nurtured through their fostering journey with their local council, with free expert training and support available. Our network of 11 local councils includes Bedford Borough Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Luton Borough Council, Norfolk County Council, Peterborough City Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Suffolk County Council and Thurrock Council.

Each council has a slightly different way of working but we all share the same aims:

• To improve the experience that our foster carers have during the application process

• To provide solid training and in-depth support to ensure our foster parents can care with confidence, and

• To increase the number of foster carers working with us across the region so we can keep our children rooted in their local communities

Fostering is extremely rewarding. As a foster carer **you can make a real difference to a child’s life**, providing them with the nurturing home life they need to give them every chance of a happy childhood and to succeed in life. It’s a big commitment to become a foster carer but is extremely worthwhile. The rewards are enormous – some of our carers have been fostering for over

30 years!

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**The Fostering Service Vision**

The Suffolk Fostering Service vision is:

*To ensure that every child or young person experiences a safe, loving and stable home for the duration of their time in foster care.*

*A place they can call home, where they feel a sense of belonging and hope for the future, with people who care and help them succeed.*

The Service encourages working together to create an innovative fostering service, which provides safe and nurturing family-based care for children and young people who are unable to live within their own families. The Service continually strives to provide high quality care for children and young people, so they are able to achieve better outcomes in adult life.

**The Aims & Objectives of the Fostering Service**

The Suffolk County Council Fostering Service is part of the overarching corporate parenting service, which is responsible for all of Suffolk’s children in care. The Fostering Service aims to achieve continuous improvements and deliver the best possible outcomes for the widest range of children looked after by our foster carers. This includes the development of the **Suffolk Signs of Safety and Wellbeing** approach to practice in all aspects of service delivery to children, families, and foster carers.

The Service is committed to ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice informs all of our work with children, colleagues, foster carers and birth family, and that placement resources provide equal opportunities of access to all children and young people, irrespective of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, age, gender, sexuality, or disability.

For more information about Children and Young People’s Services in Suffolk

please visit our [website](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/fostering-and-adoption/adoption/post-adoption-support)

**Emotional Wellbeing & Health Lifestyle**

• To promote healthy lifestyle choices for all foster carers linked to the health and development of children and young people.

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**Ensuring Safety**

• To actively recruit, assess and prepare prospective foster carers that reflect the diversity of the local community and who will provide high quality, safe and flexible family care for a wide range of children including disabled children requiring a short break service (Link).

* To ensure placements with family and friends foster care, known as Kinship Care, are rigorously assessed, and fully supported to keep children safe and well in their own networks.

• To ensure good quality decision making in relation to foster carer registration through efficient, effective management of the Fostering Panel.

• To review annually foster carer registration in line with the national minimum of standards and regulations.

• To provide a responsive fostering service that best matches the demands

for foster placements with available resources.

• To provide fostering placements that are stable, nurturing, and supportive for the child or young person and which will promote and value their culture, ethnicity, and identity.

• To take full regard of the child or young person’s individual needs, however complex, alongside their expressed wishes and feelings when seeking to match with placement provision.

• To provide a comprehensive foster carer support service during office hours and an out of hours call service to provide support and assistance during the evening and at weekends.

• To provide regular supervision, post approval training and other opportunities for foster carer self-development in line with competencies, skills and knowledge regarding the day-to-day task.

• To work in close partnership with the Safeguarding Service to monitor placement stability and ensure effective response to any allegations made against foster carers.

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**Achieving Full Potential for Children & Young People**

• To work in close partnership with the Suffolk Virtual School and the Suffolk Children in Care Health Team to ensure foster carers are able to promote the best educational and health outcomes for children in their care.

• To promote the best outcomes for children in placement and foster carers through care planning and promoting carers use of delegated authority.

**Support & Learning Opportunities**

• To provide an extensive range of learning & development opportunities through the Suffolk County Council CPD online including online training (Kate Cairns Associates), training programmes (developmental trauma, first aid, safeguarding and e-safety) and more in-depth programmes including the Suffolk Fostering Toolkit and Therapeutic Fostering Course.

• Dedicated family support practitioners to support and enable foster carers with Theraplay informed practice and parenting techniques.

• To provide a range of foster carer support groups across the county to

encourage peer support and development opportunities.

• To recognise and support the role played by the carer’s own children and their wider family in the task of foster care.

• To work closely with the social worker for the child, to ensure good effective communication with the foster carer regarding the care plan and contact arrangements as set out in the foster carer agreement.

• To support the role played by the Co-production advisers from the Engagement Hub in obtaining the wishes and views of children and young people fostered by Suffolk County Council.

• To work in close partnership with the Suffolk Foster Care Association and support them to extend their membership to a wider group of foster carers and to contribute to the overall development of the Fostering Service. For

more information regarding the SFCA please visit [their website.](http://www.suffolkfca.org.uk/)

**Finance**

• To provide fostering allowances in line with government recommended rates. In addition to the allowance, carers can receive a fee in line with Suffolk’s Tier Alignment Scheme. All carers are aligned to a Tier level, and most receive a corresponding fee, in recognition of their skills and experience and the complexity of the placement they are able to offer.

* For full details of Suffolk’s fees and allowances, please visit Suffolk Fostering Website

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**Leaving Care**

• To work in close partnership with Suffolk County Council’s Leaving Care service to ensure that foster carers are able to fully support the young people in their care, as they make the transition to further or higher education or employment and independent living where appropriate.

**How we monitor and evaluate our services**

Suffolk Fostering Service strives to constantly improve and develop with the key aim to improve outcomes for children and families. High priority is placed on monitoring and evaluation of the service and gaining service user feedback to use in service development.

**Monitoring of the Fostering Service**

The performance of the service is monitored and analysed in the Annual



Report

The Fostering Panel performs a quality assurance function to uphold best practice. An Annual Panel Report is produced.



Staff at all levels are provided with regular supervision by a line manager and clinical consultation is also available for very complex cases.



The Corporate Parenting Management Group receives quarterly reports on the performance of the fostering service.



The professional adviser provides support, advice, and quality assurance to the Fostering panel. The adviser manages the Panel arrangements, the Central List, facilitates learning and development for panel members and supports the Independent Panel Chair.



Regular audits are undertaken to ascertain the quality of social work practice and service delivery and inform fostering service improvements. Analysis of disruptions to placements, via a disruption meeting.



There is regular monitoring by the Permanence Consultation and Referral Meeting of the progress of children prior to placement to include scrutiny of family finding activity of permanent placements. The child’s statutory review along with the function of the Independent Reviewing Officer has a quality assurance role.



A member of the fostering service monitors permanence planning for all children in care.



![Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()The child’s statutory review along with the function of the Independent Reviewing Officer has a quality assurance role.

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**Feedback from service users**

Suffolk Fostering Service aims to gain feedback from applicants throughout their approval process and from carers and children during their fostering career. This includes:

Feedback requested by fostering panel on the views of applicants on the assessment and review process.



Questionnaires following the preparation course for prospective carers. The statutory children in care review ensures that the child and birth



parent’s views are fully explored.

The agency places high priority on direct work with children and provide the opportunity for them to explore their feelings and give their views.



Chat to Change (C2C) - our older children in Care Council are a self-governing group of young people who are in care or leaving care who meet to discuss what’s good about being in care, what’s not so good and what could be better. They discuss many issues and work closely with the corporate parenting board to ensure their views co-produce services



Brighter Futures links with groups of children and young people who are in care to ensure they can have their say in all matters affecting their lives.



Feedback relating to the experience of coming to Permanence panel for those Early Permanence carers.



Evaluation forms are completed with foster carers before and after sessions given to model and encourage the use of Theraplay based strategies.



Feedback from child’s social worker, child, IRO and carers at least



annually for each carers review

A new bi-weekly “Inside Fostering” newsletter.



Feedback collated from carers attending training courses and shared through joint meetings with workforce development/training providers to develop training programme and individual courses.



Online questionnaires sent out, and forums held with foster carers to consult on key changes of policy and service developments, and general carer satisfaction.



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The views of foster carers are gathered during regular supervisions with an allocated Fostering Social Worker and fed through to Practice Managers/Consultant Social Workers.



We are working closely with Suffolk Foster Care Association holding regular meetings and consultation sessions to gain feedback, working in partnership on issues and jointly organising events such as a conference for foster carers.



Service user feedback gained from collaborative audits of cases, which are incorporated into reports analysing the performance of the service.



![Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()Exit interviews are undertaken to gain feedback on foster carer experience, and any learning from this can be explored by the service,

![Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()The feedback from the above sources is analysed and it is used for service improvement and development.

![Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()We have processes for making, maintaining, monitoring, and reviewing family time plans for each fostered child.

**Principles & Standards of Care**

The Fostering Service seeks to deliver an excellent service for the children, young people, foster carers and their families that complies with the relevant legislation, regulations, and good practice guidance regarding children in foster care. The Fostering Service is committed to the best outcomes for children in care and the service works in close partnership with all Suffolk County Council services with responsibility for children in care.

**Numbers of Children/Young People in Care & Details of Carer Approval** At the beginning of April 2024 there were 393 households approved as mainstream, Family & Friends, and Short Break Link foster carers. There were 506 children which was 54.5% of Suffolk’s 928 children in care placed with in-house foster carers.

**Foster Care Placements**

The Fostering Service provides a range of fostering options for children in the care of Suffolk County Council. The services offered are to meet a diverse range of needs, circumstances and backgrounds of children who are not able to live with their own families. There are circumstances where a relative or a friend of the child in care may also be assessed as a foster carer and this service is referred to as kinship foster care.

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**1. Short-Term Time-Limited Placements**

Some Foster carers will look after children on a short-term basis, until the child can return home or moves on to a permanent placement. The time a child will spend in short term foster care can vary, though it will usually be for several months or years. These children and young people need nurturing care together with help to understand their experiences and the uncertainty of their future.

**2. Short Breaks**

Some foster carers will offer planned short break care, to support the main foster carers in their fostering role e.g. to enable them to take holidays or have weekend breaks.

**3. PACE Scheme**

Short term placements primarily overnight, caring for a young person who is on remand in police custody whilst involved in court proceedings and they cannot live at home. Foster carers will relinquish responsibility for the young person once they have taken them to court the following morning.

**4. Emergency Care**

Emergency foster care provides placements for children and young people at very short notice. Often this is the first placement the child will have coming into care from their birth family and little information may be known about them. The carers offer flexibility and are available at night and weekends.

**5. Long Term and Permanence Foster Placements**

Many children who are not able to live with their birth families will need to find permanence with a new permanent family. Some foster carers care for children into adulthood and see them as a member of their family for life. Many young people remain with their carers after they turn 18, this is known as Staying Put and is supported by the Leaving Care Service.

**6. Foster to Adopt / Early Permanence Placements**

When we know it is highly likely that a child will need an adoptive family, but the court proceedings are still in progress, we sometimes place the child on a fostering basis with a family who have been approved to both foster and adopt. This avoids a potentially upsetting move for the child and can be helpful in forming attachment, but it may initially be a less certain situation for the carers. We offer particular training and support to carers in these circumstances.

**7. Suffolk’s Therapeutic Fostering**

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Suffolk’s Therapeutic Fostering team provides therapeutic support to foster carers who are caring for children and young people presenting with emotional distress and challenging behaviours resulting from neglect and or trauma. The team has a wide range of offers aimed at helping foster carers understand and meet the needs of vulnerable children.

This includes:

• Short term interventions, such as Theraplay Informed Practice or

Positive Parenting strategies are offered to individual foster carers as well as family psychotherapy sessions with a solution-focused emphasis.

• Consultations – enabling the ‘right heads’ to get around the table.

Consultations often involve both social workers concerned as well as the carer/s and at least one member of the Therapeutic Fostering Team. They can be ‘one-offs’ to discuss a formulation and identify roles and next steps, or repeated sessions monitoring change, supporting progress, and reinforcing suggestions and encouragement.

• Group programmes, such as Fostering Toolkit and Mini Toolkits (formerly KEEP) and The Therapeutic Course are run throughout the year and try to service the various regions within Suffolk fairly.

• Direct work, such as foster carer therapeutic supervisions, which are built into the Therapeutic Course as well as WAM (What a Muddle) Training are offered to foster carers and social worker working with them.

• Skills coach sessions for children looked after, the STF Coaches contribute to the therapeutic relationship between carers, children, and professionals. The aim of STF Coaching is to enable a young person to engage in a programme of coaching sessions that will lead to them developing self-coaching skills. STF Coaching involves identifying and working towards achieving goals that the young person has generated, accepted, and feels motivated by. The role of the skills coach is to guide the young person on this journey. The coaching will be goal focused, flexible, child-centred and regularly reviewed.

• Regular training modules on topics such as Developmental Trauma, Window Of Tolerance, and Dissociation etc. This training is open to foster carers, adopters and special guardians as well as CYP staff. Further training is regularly being developed in line with feedback received from both carers and social work colleagues.

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• We provide training in Online safety skills called ‘Think You Know’ which is a comprehensive look at how to support our children and young people to avoid some of the pitfalls of the world wide web, navigate social media and to increase awareness and strategies for protecting themselves online

• Suffolk have 3 established Mockingbird constellations. The Mockingbird Model is a licensed fostering model where groups of foster carers are brought together with a Hub Home Carer taking the lead role in supporting up to ten other carers and their placements. The model offers foster carers and children a supportive network where they take part in community and activity meetings together to develop positive and supportive relationships. The Hub carer also offers overnights and day-care to those in the Hub creating a normalized setting for children in the group. During 2024/25 Suffolk will be launching a 4th Mockingbird hub.

The team aims to assess and provide appropriate support quickly to prevent placements breaking down when possible and give foster carers the confidence and skill needed to continue to care for the child/ren in placement. It intends to provide a truly ‘Multi-agency support’ function with clear and direct links with Suffolk Supervising Social Workers, Child Social Workers and the NHS specialist team Connect who provide therapeutic mental health interventions to children in care across Suffolk.

**Kinship Foster Carers**

Kinship care is where a child or young person in care lives with family, friends or another adult known to them. In Suffolk, Kinship foster carers are assessed and presented to Fostering Panel for approval, they receive the same allowances and have a Fostering Social Worker allocated to support them. They have access to the same range of training and learning opportunities as all of Suffolk’s foster carers.

These foster carers provide both short-term care and long-term foster care for children of all ages and often care for sibling groups and complex teenagers. This team also supports the assessment of Kinship Foster Carers if they wish to make an application for a Special Guardianship Order once the child in their care is settled. The team provides assessment and training for all Kinship foster carers including those making an application for a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order. Once approved, Special Guardians are supported by the Permanence Support team.

The team are also responsible for assessing and supporting Private Foster Carers and the children who are living in these arrangements; these children often have complex needs and may be on the edge of care.

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**The Link Scheme**

This scheme aims to provide a flexible, culturally sensitive, and safe service that promotes the diverse needs of those children with severe learning, physical or sensory disability. It seeks to offer a range of short break options that encourage social inclusion by working in partnership with the child and their parents or carers.

The objectives of the Link Scheme are:

* To provide a ‘stepping stone’ for those who use the Scheme to make local friendships and join in with community activities
* To offer the child the opportunity of having someone special interested in them, in addition to their own family
* To give their parents or carers a ‘breathing space’ and an opportunity to spend time with the rest of their family
* To offer planned short breaks which could include home sitting, day care and overnight care in the Link Carer’s home, and community-based activities
* To assess, approve, monitor and review Link Carers in accordance with the required standards
* To provide targeted ongoing training, support and supervision of Link Carers to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to provide an excellent service
* To provide any special equipment that is required to meet the care needs of any child placed
* Link Carers are supported by and supervised by their own Link Supervising Worker.

**Fostering Teenagers**

Over half of the children in care in Suffolk are aged 11 or over, yet fewer people come forward to offer to care for them. Therefore, many teenagers may not be living with Suffolk carers, and will be away from friends, school and their local community.

Teenagers are often portrayed negatively, and this may influence people’s views about teenagers. However, caring for this age group is very rewarding because it is about supporting young people to become adults and helping them to discover their place in the world.

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**Foster Carer Support**

As the largest fostering provider in Suffolk, we offer the following terms &

conditions for foster carers:

* + - * Weekly allowance and, where applicable, a fee payment
      * Loan of essential equipment
      * Regular high-quality support and supervision with a fostering social worker through a local support team
      * Access to specialist advice via Connect (CAMHS) and other specialist services
      * Support groups and activities for carer’s children in school holidays
      * Annual children who foster activity day or sons and daughters of foster carers and children in care.
      * Membership of the [Suffolk Foster Carer Association](https://suffolkfca.org.uk/new/)
      * 24 Hour support via a dedicated fostering out of hours service
      * Free Membership of the [Fostering Network](https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/)
      * Computer for those offering placements to school aged children
      * Support to achieve permanent placements
      * Up to 21 nights paid short break.
      * Extensive training & development opportunities.
      * Access to a comprehensive training programme through Suffolk County
      * Council Children Workforce Development Team
      * Access to reading material for adults & children which are reserved in
      * Suffolk County Council libraries specifically for carers
      * 4 weeks extra allowance each year to cover birthdays, holidays and religious festivals
      * Part of wider professional multi-agency team

**Key Principles in the Recruitment & Assessment Process**

* + - * The Fostering Service welcomes all applicants regardless of their ethnicity, background, faith, sexual orientation or marital status. Applicants may be disabled, working full-time, part-time or unemployed, responsible for dependents.
      * Due to the medical concerns regarding passive smoking and harm to children, particularly young children, the Fostering Service will not place children under the age of 5 where any members of the household smoke.
      * This may not be the case for kinship foster carers who would be supported to avoid exposing children to passive smoking.
      * The Fostering Service is committed to working in a way that does not

discriminate.

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* + - * The Fostering Service ensures information regarding the formal complaints procedures available to all applicants
      * The assessment process aims to help potential foster carers to have sufficient time and information to make an informed decision about
      * whether fostering is right for them and their family at this time.

**Stages of Fostering Approval Process**

The process of approving a mainstream foster carer usually takes 6 months from acceptance of the application to full approval, or 4 months for applicants who have previously fostered or are transferring from another fostering provider.

The process of approving a Kinship Foster Carer is similar but with a different assessment process and shorter timescales. The process in these cases is described in detail in the Suffolk *Procedures for the Assessment of Family and Friends as Foster Carers (2016)* document.

Following the initial enquiry, the process is divided into 2 stages, initial checks followed by assessment at Stage 1 and Stage 2, a more detailed assessment. Where appropriate, parts of these stages may be completed in parallel.

**Home Assessment (Form F)**

In summary, this assessment is completed with the applicants and the assessing social worker during visits to the applicants’ home. This assessment is presented to Fostering Panel for a recommendation, from which the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) will make a final decision on whether to approve the applicants as Foster Carers.

**The Fostering Panel**

Once the assessment is complete, applicants and the assessing social worker are invited to attend a fostering panel meeting. The Fostering Panel has a statutory role and responsibility to formally recommend approval of foster carer applicants to the Agency Decision Maker following the assessment. Panel also considers assessments from applicants to become Kinship foster carers.

The Fostering Panel is made up of social workers, foster carers, a County Councillor, professionals involved in child health or education services,

independent panel members and is chaired by an Independent Chair. Fostering Panel also considers some fostering reviews.

**The Agency Decision Makers** are Fran Arnold, Codrutza Oros-Marsh,

Elena Stanuta, Alli Hassey, Glynn Smith and Rennie Everett.



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**Disrupted Placements**

We review disrupted placements, ascertaining the causes for the breakdown to aid future planning for the child and learning for all concerned.

Unfortunately, sometimes foster placements do break down. Where there is a disruption of a long-term placement the Service convenes a *Disruption Meeting* to try to understand the factors that led to the breakdown of the placement which helps in planning future placements. The meetings are chaired by a trained Signs of Safety facilitator who does not have case responsibility for the foster carers. A summary of the conclusions of the meeting are sent to the Fostering Service Manager as well as the relevant Management Team and other involved individuals to inform future practice.

**Procedures for the investigation of allegations or complaints made against foster carers**

Suffolk County Council has the responsibility for ensuring that children are protected from significant harm as defined by the Children Act 1989 and for the investigation of any allegation or report of harm in accordance with the current safeguarding procedures.

The Fostering Service in partnership with the Safeguarding Service has established procedures for the thorough investigation of the allegation including with oversight of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). For more information, please visit the Suffolk Safeguarding website. Independent support, as well as advice and guidance, from the Fostering Network is available to all carers.

The Service will also investigate where there are Standard of Care concerns. These may be identified where a complaint does not meet the threshold for LADO processes or where ongoing worries about care provided requires a formal response.

**Safeguarding children and young people**

Suffolk Fostering Agency is committed to ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are thoroughly investigated and appropriate procedures followed. Where children are placed for foster care any safeguarding concern, incident or accident, serious illness, a child who is missing, death or serious injury of children or complaints, or incidents likely to impact on the child’s welfare are recorded and appropriately investigated in accordance with statutory and safeguarding guidance. It also ensures that outcomes are analysed and relevant parties notified.



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All staff, panel members and others involved in the service will have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance and references will be obtained and verified.

Social work staff will hold current registration with Social Work England and are expected to adhere to the standards of proficiency and the code of ethics.

[***https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-***](https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/)[***standards/***](https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/)

**Learning and Development**

The training programme for approved foster carers and Link carers in Suffolk offers an ever-increasing and comprehensive range of courses, ensuring that foster carers have the very best opportunity to be trained in the skills required to provide high quality care for children and young people.

All foster carers including family and friends carers and those offering short breaks are required to achieve the training, support and development standards (TSD) within the first 12 months of placement (or 18 months for kinship foster carers).

All foster carers will receive support and guidance to achieve this from their supervising worker and support groups. Learning and development opportunities are offered at introductory and intermediate levels allowing for the ongoing development of foster carer’s skills and knowledge base. Core course subject areas include Diversity, Attachment, Safeguarding, First Aid, Behaviour Management and Recording.

E-learning opportunities (e.g. Health for Foster Carers) are also available and carers are supported in obtaining their Level 3 Diploma by a partnership with West Suffolk College. For full details of the Suffolk Foster Carer Training Programme please visit: [www.suffolkcpd.co.uk](https://www.suffolkcpd.co.uk/login)

**Complaints**

When things go wrong it’s really important to us that we respond quickly and fairly to put them right. We will always try to resolve any areas of disagreement or concerns informally in the first instance. We will also respond promptly to formal complaints about the fostering service through our County Council Complaints Procedure.

This can be found [here](https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/service.page?id=2KbSoGJgv78).

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Our complaints procedure plays an important role in improving our service and our County Council Complaints Policy commits us to:

• Give a full and clear response to a complaint within 20 working days. If this is not possible, we advise complainants when an answer will be given.

• Look into complaints thoroughly and fairly.

• Be honest and polite and keep information confidential.

• Apologise if we have made a mistake.

• Tell complainants about what we are doing to put things right.

Our Children’s Safeguarding Service always deals with complaints that involve concerns for the safety or welfare of children in foster care. Information on this service can be found at the Suffolk Safeguarding Children's Board Website:

<http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/>

**Advocacy and Children’s Participation**

Suffolk has developed a children’s promise to Children in Care, which can be found on [https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/childrens-rights-for-children-and-young-people-in-care/#tab2) [care-and-care-leavers/childrens-rights-for-children-and-young-people-in-](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/childrens-rights-for-children-and-young-people-in-care/#tab2) [care/#tab2](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/childrens-rights-for-children-and-young-people-in-care/#tab2)

**Advocacy**

Looked after children and young people in care are entitled to the support of an independent advocate if they wish to make representations or complain about the service they receive. They can also have an advocate to support them during meetings or to help resolve an issue. Children and young people are able to access an independent advocate provided by POhWer.

**Independent Visitor**

Looked after children and young people in care are also entitled to the support of an independent visitor. This is a volunteer who is independent of the child’s care situation and acts as a befriender, visiting them once a month to do an activity. Independent visitors are provided by Anglia Care Trust. [admin@angliacaretrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@angliacaretrust.org.uk)

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**Participation**

Children and young people are kept safest when their voice is heard and services are most effectively provided when they have had a say in their development and delivery. Using the principles of ‘You said, We did’ children and young people are invited to participate in Suffolk’s Children in Care Councils - Brighter Futures and C2C.

During 2024-2025 children and young people will continue to be involved in talking about their experiences of foster care and how well Suffolk is delivering its Promise to children in care. **For more details of children & young people’s independent advocacy, independent visiting and participation please contact the Engagement Hub on Freephone 0800 9171119.**

Where to find us



The Fostering team is countywide, based at Endeavour House.

**Our Fostering Teams are based at:**

Endeavour House

8 Russell Road

Ipswich Suffolk IP1 2BX

Riverside Campus

4 Canning Road

Lowestoft

NR33 0EQ

West Suffolk House

Western Way

Bury St. Edmunds

IP33 3YU



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Saxon House

1 Whittle Road, Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate

Ipswich

IP2 0UH

Lothingland Community Unit

4 Airey Close

Oulton

NR32 3AX

**Our Fostering Panels are currently heard virtually, however the following locations are available:**

Endeavour House

8 Russell Road

Ipswich

Suffolk

IP1 2BX

West Suffolk House

Western Way

Bury St. Edmunds

IP33 3YU

For all public enquiries please call: 0845 606 6067

**Additional Contacts (Agency Managers)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sarah Ablett | Service Manager for Fostering and Sufficiency | 01473 262632 |
| Caroline Hughes | Service Manager for Adoption and Permanence | 01284 758468 |
| Gill Davies | Panel Professional Adviser | 01473 264921 |
| Sarah-Jane Smedmor | Director Children and Families | 01473 264641 |
| Codrutza Oros-Marsh | Assistant Director for Children’s Social  Care and Youth Justice | 01473 264167 |
| Glynn Smith | Head of Corporate Parenting | 01284 758646 |

**Agency Medical Advisers**

Dr Awais Khan and Dr Moira Pinkney are based at:

St Helen’s House

571 Foxhall Rd

Ipswich

IP3 8LX

Phone: 01473 321209

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**The senior managers** with overall responsibility for Fostering Services in

Suffolk are:

Sarah-Jane Smedmor - Director Children and Families

Codrutza Oros-Marsh - Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Youth Justice

Glynn Smith – Head of Corporate Parenting

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Signed:

**Sarah-Jane Smedmor**

Executive Director of Children and Young People’s Services

**Date: 17/12/2024**

Signed:

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**Bobby Bennett Date: 17/12/2024**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Service

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