

**London Borough of Waltham Forest
Corporate Parenting Service
Children and Families Directorate**

Placement and Resources

**FOSTERING SERVICE
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Aims and Objectives of Children and Young People Services	3
2.1 Equality.....	3
3. Core Values.....	4
3.1 The Child's Welfare	4
3.2 Participation of the Child.....	4
3.3 Partnership with Parents and Family	4
3.4 Maintaining Contact with Birth Families.....	4
3.5 Responsibilities Towards Looked After Children	4
3.6 Children's Rights	4
4. Commissioning Placements	5
4.1 Our Aims	5
4.2 Placement Types.....	5
4.3 Other Services.....	5
5. Fostering Service Objectives.....	6
6. Services for Children Requiring Fostering & Adoption	6
6.1 Process of Referral.....	6
6.2 Matching Children and Families	7
6.3 Fostering to Adopt.....	7
6.4 Dual Approval.....	8
7. Connected Persons.....	8
8. Services for Foster carers	9
8.1 Recruitment	9
8.2 Preparation and Training.....	10
8.3 Fostering Assessments	10
9. Fostering Panel	11
10. Fostering Support.....	11
11. Family and Friends (Connected Persons) Foster Care	12
11.1 Assessment.....	13
11.2 Support and Training	13
12. Duty Service	14
13. Foster Carers' Charter.....	14
14. National Minimum Standards (NMS)	14
14.1 Outcomes for Children and Young People	14
14.2 Quality of Service Provision.....	15
14.3 Safeguarding Children and Young People	16
14.4 Leadership and Management.....	16
15. Organisational Structure.....	17
15.1 Waltham Forest Council Fostering Service	17
15.2 Management of the Service.....	17
15.3 Staff Details	18
16. Complaints	20
16.1 Making a Formal Complaint.....	20
16.2 Ofsted.....	21

1. Introduction

The Statement of Purpose is a requirement of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

The Fostering Service's policies, procedures and written guidelines accurately reflect the process listed in this Statement of Purpose. All members of staff and Foster carers are supplied with a copy of the Statement.

2. Aims and Objectives of Children and Young People Services

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is committed to providing excellent standards of care to Looked After Children by maximising their life chances and helping them to enjoy stable and permanent relationships with significant adults.

The Council expects that its Fostering Service will work in partnership with all agencies and staff involved in the planning and care of Looked After Children, including Health and Education. Waltham Forest also works with other voluntary agencies and local authorities in the Fostering consortium. Our objective is to fully develop the corporate parenting role and to realise our commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children in public care.

The Fostering Service recruits, assesses, prepares, trains and supports foster carers, including Friends and Family foster carers. The Service aims to provide foster placements for all Looked After Children in Waltham Forest and maintains the Register of all London Borough of Waltham Forest approved foster carers.

2.1 Equality

- i. Every effort must be made to place children within their own cultural, racial, linguistic and religious communities, wherever that is possible. Where this is not possible, plans must be put in place to keep the child's culture alive for them.
- ii. Children who are looked after by Waltham Forest must be given the opportunity to develop a positive identity and high self-esteem. Children will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, age, gender, sexuality, disability or social class in terms of service provision.
- iii. Children with disabilities must be placed in an environment that recognises and caters for their disability, and at the same time promotes their social inclusion.
- iv. The disadvantages experienced by Looked After Children must be recognised and appropriate Care Plans created for them which address their needs – for example, education support, mental health provision and leisure opportunities. This is fully explored with foster carers, addressed at the matching stage and reflected in children's care plans.
- v. Waltham Forest is a widely diverse community. The differences in child rearing practices, family values and attitudes, across the different spectrums of racial, cultural, religious and social classes living in the Borough, must be respected and understood.

3. Core Values

3.1 The Child's Welfare

The welfare of the child will always be paramount.

3.2 Participation of the Child

The child must be encouraged and supported to participate in decisions that affect their life insofar as this is consistent with their age and understanding.

3.3 Partnership with Parents and Family

Parents with parental responsibility and significant adults in the child's life must be assisted to properly participate in the planning and decision-making processes concerned with their child's future. They must be properly informed and consulted and their wishes ascertained and respected.

NB: Whilst parents retain parental responsibility, the exercise of this and input of other family members may be limited as a result of court imposed limitations or decisions taken by the local authority in the exercise of its duties to those children for whom it has assumed legal responsibility. Such decisions must be based primarily on the welfare of the child and not the needs of the adults.

3.4 Maintaining Contact with Birth Families

Insofar as it is consistent with their welfare every effort must be made to ensure that the child maintains an appropriate level and type of contact with their birth family and community.

3.5 Responsibilities Towards Looked After Children

Under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards the authority has the responsibility to provide a Fostering Service to children and their families and, where children cannot remain in their families, to provide accommodation. Where children cannot return to their family of origin permanent alternative care must be identified. In the first instance, every effort should be made to maintain the child in its own birth family and or community network.

Looked After Children should not be disadvantaged by that status and the local authority must act as a good parent by ensuring that the child has a high standard of care, opportunities and life chances.

3.6 Children's Rights

Children must be made aware of their rights as Looked After Children and have information that allows them to make representations and complaints where necessary.

4. Commissioning Placements

The Placements Service in Waltham Forest consists of a Qualified Social Worker who manages three Placements Officers, one of which is dedicated to young people who are moving into more independent placements. A Senior Practitioner post has also recently been developed.

4.1 Our Aims

- To provide safe, healthy, high quality family care, where physical and emotional needs will be met.
- To carefully match children and young people with foster carers and those young people who require residential care within the private and voluntary sector. This includes working closely with our colleagues within the SEN Team and children with disabilities.

4.2 Placement Types

- Short term placements – these placements, which include ‘emergency placements’ can last for a few days, weeks or months whilst plans are made for the child’s future.
- Long term through to adulthood – these placements are those in which the foster carer cares for the child/young person until adulthood.
- Parent and child placements – these placements support the parent to care for their child alongside the plans from the local authority.
- Remand placements – these placements provide substitute care for those young people remanded to care by the Court.
- Placements for children with complex health needs.
- Specialist placements for these children with foster carers who have the relevant experience and skills.

4.3 Other Services

The team provide a number of other services on behalf of children & young people:

- The manager operates a Placements Surgery once a month at the Children’s Rights Office.
- Chair Transfer Protocol meetings for external foster carers transferring agencies.
- Attend Standards of Care meetings, placement assessment meetings and placement planning meetings.
- The team arrange for the security and storage of young people’s personal belongings and furniture if they are unable to remain in their current accommodation.
- The team provide a quality assurance process in the submission of Housing Reports to the Housing Department.

- Liaise with other local authorities in setting up reciprocal arrangements for young people wishing to access their priority housing outside of their own authorities.
- The team deal with financial matters relating to placements and children and young people's savings.
- Work with our colleagues in commissioning in relation to the monitoring of external providers.
- Attend provider's forums.
- Arrange and oversee the decorating of young people's own tenancies.
- Develop policies, procedures and protocols for the service area.

5. Fostering Service Objectives

1. To provide a comprehensive, high quality Fostering Service to Waltham Forest's residents which is sensitive to the needs of all, recognises differences and is reflective of ethnic origin, culture, faith, gender, disability, economic position and sexual orientation.
2. To provide information, advice and guidance to those wishing to foster and to children and young people and their families using the service in Waltham Forest.
3. To actively recruit families for children in Waltham Forest needing long term fostering.
4. To provide support to all those involved in Fostering. This includes children and families who need support when children are in care.
5. To provide open services which encourage and enable consultation with our service users.
6. To be accessible and accountable for all our work.

6. Services for Children Requiring Fostering & Adoption

6.1 Process of Referral

The work with children looked after by Waltham Forest's Children's Services is undertaken by social workers based in the Children in Care, Referral and Advice and Safeguarding and Family Support social work teams and specialist workers in the Children with Disabilities Team, all of which are now based at Juniper House in central Walthamstow.

As far as is safe and practical children are maintained within their family of origin. Where this is no longer possible, and a decision is made for the child to become looked after by the local authority alternative carers need to be identified. The social worker will first look within the child's family and friends' network to see if there is anyone known to the child who is suitable and able to take care of them. The worker has to explore all potential

family members and will only consider foster care with stranger carers if all potential family carers are deemed as unsuitable to provide care.

Where family or friends are not able to care for the child the child's social worker must complete a placement request form giving details of the child and their situation. In some cases, assessments of family members are in the process of being completed or will need to be undertaken. When there are no other alternatives and fostering is considered as part of the Care Plan then a referral is made to the Placement Team in The Placements and Resources Service.

The referral information helps the Placement Team to find the right foster family or placement for the child. It also assists the team in planning a recruitment strategy that best meets the needs of Looked After Children in the Borough.

6.2 Matching Children and Families

All task centred short term placements are made via the Placement Team. They will use the child's referral information, consider the wishes and feelings of the child and their birth family and try to identify suitable foster families. For example, in the right location to get the child to school, can facilitate contact and where possible match the cultural and religious needs of the child. They will first look at the in house foster carers, if there is not a suitable match, the Placements Manager will seek permission to do a search with Independent Fostering Agencies, who have been Pan London approved.

When a potential family is identified information about the family or families will be given to child's social worker and manager for them to make the decision about which family to use. Where the placement is not required in an emergency, arrangements will be made with the child/young person and foster carer to arrange a planned move where the child can visit and get to know the family prior to moving in.

The Placement Team also currently family find for children and young people who may need longer term placements or where there have been placement break downs. In these situations, more detailed information is required including care plans and child permanence reports. There is also a more formal matching process.

Some of the children referred may later need adoption placements and these are referred to the Coram Ambitious for Adoption, who support Waltham Forest in finding families as part of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). There may however be other permanency options identified in the child's care plan such as special guardianship or long term fostering. Where appropriate, and with Court's permission, Children's Services try to establish a contingency plan or parallel planning for children to try and avoid any unnecessary delay.

The Placement and Resources Service undertakes all recruitment of Foster carers. The recruitment of Foster carers is reviewed regularly to properly reflect the needs of the children requiring placements. Waltham Forest is a member of the North East London Fostering Consortium and is involved in joint training and development of Foster carers and in joint recruitment activities.

6.3 Fostering to Adopt

Fostering to adopt is a form of fostering and adoption for children in care who are likely to be adopted but who still have a possibility of being reunited with

their birth family. Fostering to adopt is a better option for the child as it prevents them from being placed with temporary foster carers before moving to a permanent placement with an adoptive family, minimising disruption for the child.

Children are placed at the earliest opportunity with specially trained foster carers, who are also approved to adopt. The child remains with the foster carers while their birth parent(s) and extended families, who often have severe difficulties and issues in their lives, are rigorously and intensely assessed to see whether the child can be returned to them. In the event that these assessments are not positive the child remains with the foster carers who then proceed to adopt the child once the court has given permission for the child to be adopted.

Coram Ambitious for Children through the RAA seeks to recruit, assess, prepare, train and support fostering to adopt carers. Potential carers will complete the standard adoption preparation and subsequent Fostering to Adopt Preparation. Preparation will encourage and support foster carers and their families who are considering this option.

6.4 Dual Approval

Coram Ambitious for Children through the RAA also progress dual approvals. Prior to having a child placed in the home, a recruited foster carer must meet the requirements for approval of both the fostering service and the adoption service (dual approval/concurrent carer). Living with their dually approved carers as early as possible means the child has a greater chance of stability and of forming secure relationships and attachments, even though there is uncertainty about their future.

As a concurrent carer you will be approved for both fostering and adoption and will receive tailored training and support for this particular role by the RAA. The relevant workers will discuss with you your motivation, resilience, support networks and ability to manage this specialist task. You will receive guidance and support from your social worker throughout the process and you will also be entitled to a fostering allowance until the placement becomes one of adoption or the child is returned to the birth family.

7. Connected Persons

Children may be brought up by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons and in a range of different arrangements.

Family and Friends carers play a unique role in enabling children and young people to remain with people they know and trust if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents. Family and Friends often start to care for other people's children in a crisis or emergency situation. These children may or may not be looked after by the local authority. The majority of the relatives who provide care are grandparents, aunts and uncles and older siblings.

The key principle of the Children Act 1989 is that children should be enabled to live within their families unless this is not consistent with their welfare.

LB Waltham Forest will not interfere with informal care arrangements which meet legal requirements unless there is a request for services or where there are safeguarding concerns.

LB Waltham Forest promotes permanence for children by seeking to enable those who cannot live with their parents to remain with members of their extended family or friends, providing where appropriate, a better alternative to growing up in the care of the local authority.

Children are active participants, and their wishes and feelings will be sought and taken into account when making plans for them.

Where a child cannot be cared for within his or her immediate family, the family may make their own arrangements to care for the child within the family and friend's network.

The Local Authority will not normally be involved in most informal family and friend's arrangements unless it is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in need living in the area of LB Waltham Forest.

The definition of a child in need in section 17(10) of Children Act 1989 is broad. A child in need is a child whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or their health or development would be significantly impaired without the provision of services by the local authority, or they are disabled.

Where the criteria for a child in need is met, a joint viability assessment will be completed by a children's social worker and a member of the Permanence and Post Order team.

Following a viability assessment and a temporary approval is signed off by the Head of Service of Corporate Parenting as Agency Decision Maker. Where the child becomes looked after the process for Family & Friends (Connected Persons) assessment will need to be followed as in Section 12: Family & Friends (Connected Persons) Foster Care. More information on family and friends connected persons foster care continues of section 11.

8. Services for Foster carers

8.1 Recruitment

Advertising campaigns are conducted for general recruitment of Foster carers including specialist carers and short break carers. A recruitment strategy is agreed each year based on the needs of the department and lessons learnt.

The criteria for recruitment are kept under review depending on the needs of the children on referral.

Systems are in place to respond promptly to enquiries. Everyone interested in Fostering for Waltham Forest is sent an information pack and is invited to the next monthly Information Evening.

Initial appointment home visits are offered to all applicants meeting the criteria. Fostering Social Workers discuss the outcome of these appointments in regular Fostering

Assessment Team meetings and a decision is made whether to invite the applicant to submit their application and attend the next preparation group.

8.2 Preparation and Training

Applicants are invited to a preparation course which uses the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) model, skills to foster, materials and workbooks.

Following an evaluation of their attendance and participation at the end of the course a decision is made about continuing with their assessment.

There are 6 courses run each year. The Fostering Service works with Fostering Consortium colleagues to share places on courses to provide a range of times for applicants to attend. We have provided places on our courses to other agencies, and we have obtained places for our families from other agencies. This is a reciprocal non-fee paying arrangement between Local Authority consortia members.

It is a requirement that all prospective Foster carers have completed a preparation course before they can be taken to the Fostering Panel for consideration.

If we are unable to provide a place on a course in a reasonable time, we will consider beginning the assessment and the applicants completing the course during the assessment process. We do however prefer the training to have been completed first.

8.3 Fostering Assessments

Looking after someone else's children is a challenging responsibility. It is not something everyone can do. Prospective carers need to know more about fostering and its implications for their family, what support we provide and what more we want to learn about them.

After initial enquiries, prospective carers are sent an information pack. They will also be invited to an information evening.

Once applicants have returned the application forms to us, we arrange for a Fostering Assessment social worker to visit the applicant at their home.

Once an applicant and the Fostering Service agree to proceed with an application the prospective carer can join the next available preparation group. Following this an assessment will be started.

Foster carers assessments are completed using the BAAF Prospective Foster carers Report Template. Assessments are normally completed within six months from receipt of the formal application and are taken to panel for consideration for approval. We encourage applicants to think about what they have to offer in terms of their personal experience, faith, culture, ethnic origin, knowledge and skills gained throughout their lives. If there are areas that need development, we work with them to explore ways of adding to their competencies. We therefore have an open and inclusive approach in evaluating what applicants have to offer.

We require that applicants have sufficient time and space to meet the demands of fostering. All applicants are encouraged to think carefully about their support networks - including family - and single sex households are asked to consider who will provide role models for a different gender to them.

Applicants are given their report to read and comment on and are then asked to sign it. They are encouraged to add to it if they wish. They are later invited to attend the Fostering Panel when the approval is being considered.

All Foster carers have an allocated supervising social worker in the Fostering Support Team. Once approved this worker helps them consider children for a match, where the placement can be planned and works jointly with the child's social worker when they are linked.

9. Fostering Panel

The London Borough of Waltham Forest's Fostering Panel usually meets on the third Tuesday of each month. The Panel makes recommendations concerning the approval of Foster carers including friend and relative carers. The Panel considers information on revisions to Foster carers approval terms and terminations of approval and resignations. The panel also considers the first annual household review of every Foster Carer and any subsequent annual household reviews where there has been a significant event or change of circumstance. The Fostering Panel has the capacity to arrange extra panels to avoid any unnecessary delay.

Panel membership complies with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and an independent member chairs the panel.

The Fostering Service has a designated Panel Adviser to the Panel. The adviser feeds back to Fostering Team Manager issues raised by the Panel concerning practice and procedures as well as sharing good practice identified by the Fostering Panel.

The Agency Decision Maker is the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting Service and meets with the panel chair to discuss any issues arising from panel recommendations and to gain an overview of the panel's functioning.

Annual training is provided for panel members, including joint training with the Fostering Teams.

10. Fostering Support

The new National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Foster Care published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2011 emphasises the important part played by the foster carers of both statutory fostering services and independent fostering agencies. The majority of children and young people in public care live with foster carers.

We recognise the difficulties and challenges associated with fostering children. To this end we are committed to supporting carers through the following:

- We provide monthly supervision visits to Foster carers or more frequently if required or requested.
- We run support groups on a monthly basis both during the day and in the evening, to ensure the widest participation.

We hold foster carers forums open to all foster carers twice a year, sourcing specialist speakers and presentations on topics of interests raised by foster carers.

- We have a skills payment in addition to the fostering allowance for all Regulation 27 carers and weekly payments to carers.
- The review of all payment levels to carers on an annual basis.

We ensure that all foster carers are working towards the Training Support and Development Standards and receive support from supervising social workers through foster carers supervision to progress this.

- We support our local foster carers association Waltham Forest Foster carers Association (WFFCA). The WFFCA holds quarterly meetings with Fostering Management to get Departmental updates and address issues of concern to foster carers. In addition, WFFCA and fostering management also hold fortnightly meetings to give foster carers a voice and to progress any urgent issues identified.
- Access to Foster line – and support by Waltham Forest via the Fostering Network around allegations and complaints or standards of care meetings.
- Access to health advice from a dedicated Looked After Children's nurse.
- Access to education advice from a dedicated Looked After Children's education manager.
- Duty Officer support during the day.
- Payment through the fostering allowance against damage to a foster carer's home.
- Legal expenses insurance via Fostering Network.
- Membership of Fostering Network for all our approved foster carers.

11. Family and Friends (Connected Persons) Foster Care

The principle aims, objectives and core values of the Fostering Service apply to all Family and Friends foster carers.

A dedicated worker from the Permanence and Post Order Support Team undertakes the full assessment of Family and Friends Carers whether the child has already temporarily been placed or the plan for the child is to live with a Family and Friends carers either in the short or longer term.

In seeking to support Family and Friends (Connected Persons) foster carers the local authority Family and Friends team works closely with the wider local authority Children's Services department. It also works with other departments and agencies to mitigate any limitations to carers' capacity to care for a foster child.

11.1 Assessment

Potential Family and Friends foster carers will be provided with information about the assessment process so that they know what is expected of them and how they will be assessed. This includes the criteria that will be used and how particular issues for Family and Friends foster carers will be addressed and any support offered during the assessment process.

When assessing an individual's suitability to be a Family and Friends (Connected Persons) foster carer the likely length of the placement, the age of the child and, if appropriate, the capacity of the wider family to contribute to the child's long term care are taken into account.

Family and Friends (Connected Persons) foster carers are asked about their existing knowledge of the foster child's behaviour and background and any concerns they have about the child, as well as being provided with information about the child that is held by the fostering service.

The child's introduction to the new fostering arrangement takes account of the fact that whilst the child may know the carer well the carer's role in the child's life is now changing. This is explained to the child and the carer is provided with the support they need to manage the transition.

Family and Friends (Connected Persons) assessments are completed using the BAAF Form C. For children who have already been temporarily placed this must be completed within 16 weeks with the possible agreement via the Panel process to extend this to a further 8 weeks. For those children not yet living with their family and friend's carer a full assessment will be completed prior to placing the child.

The approval and review of foster carers as outlined above applies equally to Family and Friends (Connected Persons) Foster carers. However, there are a number of areas that must be considered which are particular to this group of carers. This is outlined within the Waltham Forest Family and Friends policy and procedures.

11.2 Support and Training

Financial and other support is provided to all foster carers according to objective criteria that do not discriminate against foster carers that have a pre-existing relationship with the child. Family and Friends carers may require some services to be delivered in a different way, but there will be equality of provision and entitlement.

Family and Friends foster carers have access to support groups that meet their particular needs.

Family and Friends foster carers have access to training available to other foster carers, but the Fostering Service is also developing training that addresses the particular needs and circumstances of Family and Friends foster carers.

Family and Friends foster carers come into foster care not so much to become professional foster carers but because they want to make sure that the children in their care remain within their extended family. Their development needs therefore are likely to be different to those of other foster carers. Our training for foster carers is offered to all Family and Friend carers.

In recognition of their particular circumstances Family and Friends carers who are approved as foster carers have an extended period in which to complete the standards which is within 18 months of approval.

During the assessment process and post-approval, the Family and Friends carer has the continued support of assessing/supervising social worker from the Permanence and Post Order Support Team and post approval as connected carers will be transferred to the Fostering Team for allocation of a supervising social worker for ongoing support and supervision.

12. Duty Service

A Fostering Duty Service is provided Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.15pm. This is a telephone service where Social workers give general advice to the public and workers in the department about fostering. Duty also provides the first response to general advertisements to recruit carers and the follow-up of enquiries is arranged on a duty basis.

There is a fostering support outside these hours operating from 5.15pm to 12midnight. This is staffed by supervising social workers and includes any issues about family members contact with foster children.

After 12midnight the general Emergency Duty Team is available to foster carers.

13. Foster Carers' Charter

Waltham Forest's Foster Carer outlines our commitment to children and foster carers. The Charter is available on Fosternet and on the Council's website:

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/fostering>

14. National Minimum Standards (NMS)

Please note that individual standards may be taken into account and lead to recommendations under any of the judgement areas.

14.1 Outcomes for Children and Young People

- Children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care, are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases and know how to obtain support and make a complaint **(NMS 1)**.
- Children have a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background **(NMS 2)**.
- Children enjoy sound relationships with their foster family, interact positively with others and behave appropriately **(NMS 3)**.
- Children live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where they are able to access the services to meet their health needs **(NMS 6)**.

- Children are able to enjoy their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged to engage in leisure activities **(NMS 7)**.
- Children are able to make a positive contribution to the foster home and their wider community **(NMS 7)**.
- Children and young people achieve their educational potential **(NMS 8)**.
- Children have, where appropriate, constructive contact with their parents, grandparents, siblings, half-siblings, wider family, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives **(NMS 9)**.
- Children are welcomed into the foster home and leave the foster home in a planned and sensitive manner which makes them feel loved and valued **(NMS 11)**.
- Children feel part of the family and are not treated differently to the foster carer's own children living in the household; the child's needs are met, and they benefit from a stable placement **(NMS 11)**.
- Children are prepared for, and supported into, adulthood so that they can reach their potential and achieve economic well-being **(NMS 12)**.

14.2 Quality of Service Provision

- Children enjoy sound relationships with their foster family, interact positively with others and behave appropriately **(NMS 3)**.
- Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable standard; the child enjoys access to a range of activities which promote his or her development **(NMS 10)**.
- The fostering service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide care for and is proactive in assessing current and future needs of children **(NMS 13)**.
- The fostering panel and decision maker make timely, quality and appropriate recommendations/decisions in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care **(NMS 14)**.
- The responsible authority has information and support from the fostering service, which it needs to facilitate an appropriate match between the carer and child, capable of meeting the child's needs and consistent with the wishes and feelings of the child, so maximising the likelihood of a stable placement **(NMS 15)**.
- Foster carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively **(NMS 20)**.
- A clear framework of training and development is in place, and this is used as the basis for assessing foster carers' performance and identifying their training and development needs **(NMS 20)**.

- Foster carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to care properly for children placed with them **(NMS 21)**.

14.3 Safeguarding Children and Young People

- Children feel safe and are safe; they understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse and accident **(NMS 4)**.
- Children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return **(NMS 5)**.
- The fostering service is provided and managed by those who are suitable to work with children and have the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to deliver an efficient and effective service **(NMS 17)**.
- There is careful selection of staff, fostering households, volunteers and the central list of persons considered suitable to be members of a fostering panel, and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children **(NMS 19)**.
- Allegations and suspicions of harm are handled in a way that provides effective protection and support for children and the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation **(NMS 22)**.
- Staff and volunteers are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children **(NMS 24)**.

14.4 Leadership and Management

- Children, their parents, foster carers, staff and the responsible authority/placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the fostering service and what services and facilities it provides **(NMS 16)**.
- The fostering service's operation meets the aims and objectives in the statement of purpose **(NMS 16)**.
- The fostering service is financially sound **(NMS 18)**.
- Where a service is to close or substantially change, there is proper planning, to make the transition for children, foster carers and staff as smooth as possible **(NMS 18)**.
- Children and foster carers receive a service from staff, volunteers and panel members, and decision makers who have the competence to meet their needs **(NMS 23)**.
- Staff and volunteers are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children **(NMS 24)**.
- The fostering service is managed ethically, effectively and efficiently, delivering a service which meets the needs of its users **(NMS 25)**.

- Records are clear, up to date, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life **(NMS 26)**.
- The premises and administrative systems are suitable to enable the service to meet the objectives of its statement of purpose **(NMS 27)**.
- Payments to foster carers are fair and paid in a timely way **(NMS 28)**.
- Foster carers are clear about the fostering service's payment structures and the payments due to them **(NMS 28)**.
- All significant events relating to the health and protection of children fostered by the service are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities **(NMS 29)**.
- Family and friends foster carers receive the support they require to meet the needs of children placed with them **(NMS 30)**.
- Children are cared for in line with their placement plan/short break care plan **(NMS 31)**.
- The fostering service takes action to chase up outstanding reviews or visits from the responsible authority, contributes to those reviews and assists the child to contribute to their reviews **(NMS 31)**.

15. Organisational Structure

15.1 Waltham Forest Council Fostering Service

Waltham Forest Council has undergone significant restructuring to ensure savings and service improvements. The Families' Directorate was established in August 2012. It incorporates Education Improvement, Children and Families, Adult Social Care, Stronger Families, Safer Communities, Public Health, Health Integration, and Strategic Commissioning across this range of services.

The Fostering Service is part of the Placement and Resources, Corporate Parenting Service within the Children and Families Directorate. The Fostering Service oversees the recruitment, assessment, supervision and support of foster carers as well as oversees the Private Fostering arrangements headed by a manager who reports to the Head of Service for Placement and Resources:

15.2 Management of the Service

The Head of Placement and Resources is responsible for the Fostering and Adoption Services, which entails working with Coram Ambitious for Adoption through the Regional Adoption Agency, the Access to Resources (Placements) Team and the Family Time Service (Contact Service), Permanence and Post Order Team.

The Placement and Resources Team is based at:

Waltham Forest Town Hall Complex
Forest Road
E17 4SU

Tel. 020 8496 1598

The Fostering Team has responsibility for the on-going recruitment, assessment, support, and supervision of in-house foster carers. Staffing in the team is as follows:

1.0 FTE	Team Manager
1.0 FTE	Deputy Team Manager
1.0 FTE	Advanced Practitioner
3.0 FTE	Senior Practitioners
6.0 FTE	Supervising Social Workers
1.0 FTE	Training Officer
1.0 FTE	Recruitment and Marketing Officer
1.0 FTE	Recruitment Administrator
0.5 FTE	Private Fostering Worker

15.3 Staff Details

All staff have DBS checks which are updated every three years.
All social work staff are registered with Social Work England (SWE).
Each team member is appraised every six months based on yearly work objectives and targets set.

The people who make up the structure of the Fostering service as follows:

Daniel Phelps Corporate Director for Children's Services	MA. Social Work Diploma in Social Work
Abigail Adieze Assistant Director Corporate Parenting Service	MSc. Advanced Social Work Studies Diploma in Social Work BSc in Nursing and Social Work Studies
Roberta Onye-Kwelu Interim Head of Service - Placements and Resources	MSc. Social Work BA Business and Finance
Roberta Onye-Kwelu Team Fostering Team Manager	MSc. Social Work BA Business and Finance
Leeford Antwi Deputy Team Manager	MSc. Child Forensic Studies, Psychology and Law BSc Social Worker
Pui-Yee Lau Advanced Practitioner	MA Social Science Diploma in Social Work
Carol Spence Fostering Reviewing Officer	Diploma in Social Work

Carolette Caines Senior Practitioner	BSc. Social Science -Dip SW
Selina Mkandla Supervising Social Worker	MA. Social Work
Mariya Bham Senior Practitioner	MA. Social Work
Cassandra Plummer Supervising Social Worker	Diploma in Social Work
Laverne Moraise Supervising Social Worker	Diploma in Social Work Diploma in Social Science
David Roth Senior Practitioner	MA. English Literature and Moral Philosophy Diploma in Social Work
Anita Awoyinka Supervising Social Worker	BSc. Social Work with Applied Studies
Chiin Guite Supervising Social Worker	MA. Social Work
Laura Owusu-Afriye Supervising Social Worker	MSc. Social Work BA. Applied Social Science
Charlotte Andrews Social Worker for Private Fostering	BSc. Social Work
Sophia Brooks Senior Marketing and Recruitment Officer	Chartered Institute of Marketing, Post-graduate Diploma in Marketing BA. Hons degree in Marketing with Business studies
Cecillia Tan Training Coordinator	MSc. Organisational Psychology CIPD Post-graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management
Charlene Alexander Recruitment Officer	BA. Hon International Marketing

16. Complaints

16.1 Making a Formal Complaint

We always try to provide good quality services, but we know that sometimes we get things wrong. Comments and complaints can help us to get things right. We try to resolve differences as soon as they arise between people.

If people are not happy with the service that they or a member of their family are receiving, or if they have applied for a service and been refused, they have the right to complain. They will normally receive our response within 10 days.

The complaints procedure has three stages:

1. At Stage One the staff or agency providing the service will handle the complaint.
2. If you are not satisfied with the reply that you have received at Stage One, it can be escalated to Stage Two. A formal investigation by an investigation officer who does not work for the service will commence.
3. If you are still not satisfied with the Stage Two response it can be escalated again to Stage Three. We will refer your complaint and our response to a review panel comprised of two of our officers - not involved in the complaint - and an independent person who will chair the panel.

You can either write directly or we will be happy to send you the complaints form.

All formal complaints should be sent to:

Complaints Manager
Social Care Complaints Team
Residents First
Waltham Forest Town Hall
Forest Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 4JF

Tel: 020 8496 3247

Fax: 020 8496 3659

Web: www.walthamforest.gov.uk

You can discuss your issue or concern with your local Councillor or MP at any time. Details of local Councillors and their surgeries are available on Waltham Forest's website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk

MP's details are available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/political-structure-mp

You may also contact the Local Government Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response you have received for your complaint by calling 0845 602 1983 or via their website at www.lgo.org.uk

16.2 Ofsted

Local Authority Social Care services are regularly inspected by Ofsted. If you have a concern or query about Waltham Forest's fostering service, you can contact Ofsted at:

Telephone number - **08456 404045** about education, adult skills or children's services

Telephone number - **08456 404040** about any other aspect.

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square Manchester M2 7LA