

# Statement of Purpose



## Apex Fostering

Written by Sali Walker, Business Manager

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## **1.Mission, Status and Constitution**

### **1.1 Mission**

The aim of the organisation is simple,

**To provide safe, loving homes where young people thrive.**

### **1.2 Status**

Apex Fostering is a private limited company established in January, 2021.

The company's registered office is; Brickfields Business Centre, High Road, Thornwood, Epping. CM16 6TH.

Registration number: 13117548

The company is registered and inspected by Ofsted and complies with the standards and expectations identified in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Amendments 2013, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and Fostering Services and Care Standards Act 2000.

The head office is located in Epping, Essex.

The agency will take referrals from Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, outer London and the local authorities on the South Central contract.

## **2.0 Culture, aims, objectives and principles**

## 2.1 Culture

### Our 6 points of culture

**Child-centered**-Everyone will put children at the centre of everything we do. Profit will never come before support, good matching and positive outcomes.

**Respect**-Everyone who comes into contact with Apex will be treated with the same respect that they would expect to be treated with. Everyone who works with and for Apex will have a strong sense of pride in the agency.

**Team**-Everyone who works for Apex whether they be a carer, staff member or self-employed is part of our team and everyone's role in that team is valued and recognised.

**Integrity**-Everyone who works for Apex will have a high level of integrity. This will mean they will be honest, they will challenge if they believe something is wrong and they will have strong values of Social justice, inclusion and conscience.

**Self responsibility**- We believe we are responsible for our own learning and we will be given every opportunity to improve and develop ourself and the organisation We will encourage feedback including how Apex can improve. Apex is a place where there is a no blame culture and it recognises we all make mistakes. These are necessary to grow and develop. It also expects people to take responsibility for their actions.

**Fun**-We believe at Apex our journey together is exciting and should be enjoyed !

## **2.2 Aims:**

- All children in our fostering households feel safe and loved.
- To ensure that children placed are supported to reach their potential.
- For everyone to work as an extended family to ensure foster carers and staff are supported to provide stability for young people.
- To ensure diversity and equality in all our areas of work where individual differences are recognised and seen as a strength.
- For staff and foster carers to work as advocates on behalf of young people and to work in partnership with the local authorities, schools and other service providers
- To ensure everyone connected to the agency is encouraged to take part in the active development of its services.
- To be an agency where people come before profit.
- To ensure services are compliant with Fostering Regulations 2011 and exceed the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

## **2.3 Objectives**

- Apex ensures that young people are carefully matched with carers to ensure a placement breakdown rate which is less than 10%.
- Young people not only feel part of their placed family but also feel part of the agency and are supported to meet other young people through events.

- Social workers visit households monthly, call carers every week and see young people at least every 8 weeks to ensure that everything is xx in the home.
- Young people are given individual memory boxes upon placement and the social worker takes them through the children guide, particularly making sure they know how to complain or raise any issues.
- Foster carers support young people to have contact with family members and other significant individuals as appropriate.
- Foster carers and the agency will work with educational establishments to make sure young people are supported to find activities they love and to reach their academic potential
- Young people's individual needs will be supported and reflected in their placement.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are sought and acted upon.
- Apex supports young people in transitioning to independent living.

### **3.0 Standards of Care and Service Quality**

#### **3.1 Placement of young people**

- Safety of both the young person and everyone in the fostering household will be the agency's priority.
- We will know our foster carers well and help them make decisions regarding the suitability of a child.
- We will undertake a thorough risk assessment and matching process.
- We will explore all areas of the referral and make sure areas such as contact, distance from school, support required are fully explored and where necessary additional funding is secured.

#### **3.2 Assessment, Approval and Panel**

Foster carers will be recruited from a variety of backgrounds to ensure the ability to meet the needs of children. Most enquiries will be via word of mouth recommendations and the website. All prospective foster carers will be given the opportunity to speak to an experienced foster carer to help them decide if fostering is something that they feel they could do. All enquiries will be responded to within 24 working hours. Home visits will take place within 5 working days.

The assessment and approval process will take place in line with regulations. Prospective carers will attend Skills to Foster training in the first half of their training. Approximate panel dates should be given to the applicant once their application has been approved by the Registered Manager.

Prospective carers will be sent a brochure of panel members along with their allocated time slot. A bank of experienced and thorough form f assessors will be formed. All form f's will be quality assured after each presentation.

Panel is independent of the agency. It makes recommendations on new applications, annual reviews, post allegation/complaint reviews, termination of approvals and advice on operational and policy issues where relevant.

Panel Members will be drawn from the Central List on a rotational basis. Panel members will be selected from a diverse range of backgrounds. These will be from the following backgrounds;

- Foster carers.
- Young people who have been in care.
- Education specialists
- Social workers who have extensive experience of working with young people in the care system.
- Counsellors/therapists

All panel members will be required to undertake training and an annual review.

Panel will convene in person or virtually depending on need.

### **3.3 Foster Carer Charter**

It is essential that the expectations between foster carers and the agency are very clear and consistent. These should be outlined in the carer handbook and in their fostering agreement.

In summary, carers can expect;

- To receive a minimum of a weekly phone call and a monthly supervision.
- Support groups every 6 weeks.
- 24 hour staffed phonenumber.
- Regular training, which is delivered on-line and face to face a wide selection of courses designed to meet their needs as foster carers.
- Carefully matched young people and support when it is needed.
- A peer mentor upon approval.
- Access to Fostering Network advice lines and independent support with allegations.
- Clear guidance and support with recording.
- Clear advice when needed.
- Regular clear communication.

### **3.4 Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

Apex is an agency which believes in continual improvement and a culture of self responsibility. This is encouraged at all levels.

The Registered Manager will ensure that a comprehensive quality assurance system is in place in line with Fostering Regulations. Safeguarding issues will be the agency's absolute priority and the Registered Manager has lead responsibility for this area. Within the reports and supervision of social workers it will be important to identify patterns especially concerning individual young people and see how they can be supported more intensively. The charms recording system will allow for swift

identification of areas of concern. This data is regularly reviewed with safeguarding and complaints standing items on the team agenda.

The Business Manager will analyse growth and other data including satisfaction surveys and audits to ensure carers, young people and staff are happy with the services provided and to examine how services can be provided more effectively.

### **3.5 Complaints Management**

The agency has clear policies regarding Complaints and Whistleblowing. These are readily available to children and young people and their families, foster carers, staff, local authorities and self employed staff.

Complaints are treated swiftly and respectfully with the aim to resolve them at a local level. If the complaint is against senior staff then an independent individual may be appointed to deal with the situation.

Complaints are an opportunity to identify where an aspect of the service may not be working and provide an excellent opportunity to develop a more robust system.

Complaints are reviewed at each team meeting unless they deal with confidential staffing issues.

### **3.6 Safeguarding**

The safeguarding of children in our care is our primary concern. Not just the children and young people placed but also birth children and those visiting foster homes. All staff and self employed staff employees are expected to ensure that the highest safeguarding practices are adhered to.

The agency policies on Missing Young People, Safeguarding and Exploitation are reviewed regularly and staff and carers receive regular training on these areas.

Allegations against staff are contained within the disciplinary procedure and allegations against carers are dealt with in the relevant policy.

### **4.0 Young People's Participation**

The agency will seek to achieve the (LILAC) award in due course. Every effort will be made to ensure that young people have an opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding their care and a review of the quality of services they are provided with. They will be involved in recruitment, deciding upon activities and producing resources.

The agency will have a young people's site on the website and we also want to provide video clips of vacant carers so young people can 'see' their carer/s and home before they arrive.

We expect young people to help shape the future development of the agency. In due course we hope to have a representative for each area and form a youth council. Until then satisfaction can be measured from feedback.

## **5.0 Services to Children and Young People**

### **5.1 Commitment to young people**

Young people placed will be visited by their allocated Apex social worker at least every 8 weeks and at this time will be seen alone so they have the opportunity to voice any concerns. Apex aims to ensure all young people feel included in decision making and are kept informed of any decision regarding their care.

The social worker will support the foster carer/s in order to support the young people in their care. They social worker will explore in relation to the foster carers that they are;

- Including the young person fully into family life
- Supporting the young persons' identity.
- Supporting the young person in learning and education
- Supporting contact with family members
- Giving them an opportunity to find activities/clubs they are interested in
- Promote the young person physical and emotional well-being.
- Ensuring there are short breaks and holidays.

### **5.2 Services**

Services available for children and young people include;

- Supervised contact with family members
- Support to access full health and educations services
- Access to national organisations for 'looked after young people'.
- Specific materials including young people's guides, newsletters and competitions.
- Events both locally and for the organisation as a whole.
- Activities and holidays
- Leaving care support
- A young people's section on the website.
- Access to tuition for children who need additional support.
- Access to a youth mentor to raise issues and ideas
- Individual and group work.
- Young people will be given a personalised memory box upon placement
- Young people will receive a £20 voucher from the agency on their birthday and a £50 voucher at Christmas.

## **6.0 Services to Foster Carers**

### **6.1 Support**

It is expected that with excellent support carers will be able to manage the stresses of fostering with greater ease and this in turn will increase placement stability. As an agency it is our responsibility to provide this.

It is essential that carers feel valued and that they are part of a support system which operates like an extended family. Carers will be called by the Director on

their birthday and receive a card. They will receive flowers at significant events such as after an operation or loss of someone close. Small actions such as this will ensure carer loyalty.

Staffed 24 hour phone line

- Family Support Workers
- Holiday payment
- Membership of Fostering Network
- A named Peer Mentor
- Support Groups every 8 weeks
- Local and regional events
- Online handbook and policies
- 6 Bulletins a year
- Access to a comprehensive range of training

## **6.2 Training and Professional Development**

Foster carers will be provided with a comprehensive range of opportunities for training and development. Prospective carers will attend the Skills to Foster training and first aid pre approval. The supervising social worker will then identify additional training required by the new carers during supervision and then produce a personal development plan as part of their annual review.

All carers will be supported to achieve their Training, Support and Development Standards.

Training will be provided online and face to face. An extensive range of training will be provided and a therapeutic training course offered to all carers.

## **6.3 Reviews**

Carers will be reviewed annually. As soon as possible a reviewing officer will be appointed to ensure there is consistency and objectivity applied across all reviews. These will be completed online by the relevant person and will include feedback from the young person, household members, family support workers, school, local authority social workers, and any other relevant parties.

Reviews can be held more frequently when there has been a complaint or allegation, a significant change in circumstances, or a de-registration is being considered.

## **7.0 Services to Local Authorities**

### **7.1 Placements**

Apex Fostering offers a range of placements

- Long-term foster placements
- Siblings
- Parent and child
- Young people with specialist needs
- Staying put placements

- Apex Xtra

## **7.2 Services**

Apex maintains a positive commitment to working with the local authority to meet the young person's care plan.

Our services to the Local Authority include;

- Reports for reviews and other meetings
- Liaison and notification of safeguarding concerns
- Attendance at meetings relating to the young person
- Family support work
- Recruitment of carers to meet local authorities needs

## **7.3 Parent and Child Placements**

Apex will make sure parent and child placements are carefully monitored inline with local authority/court requirements and foster carers are supported with training and supervision as required.

## **7.4 Apex Xtra**

Apex Xtra will be a specialist service dealing with young people with specific attachment issues, complex health issues and challenging behaviours. Carers will be intensively trained in therapeutic training. Social workers will receive group supervision from a therapeutic supervisor every 6 weeks. Foster carers will also have access to monthly clinical supervision where required and direct access to therapeutic advice.

To be part of the scheme carers will be interviewed. They will need to have at least 2 years experience of fostering and/or extensive work experience of working with young people in a nursing/residential setting.

These placements will include family support as needed and additional respite as part of their packages.

## **8.0 Management Structure and Staffing**

### **8.1 Structure**

The Registered Manager of Apex manages the social work team, Reviewing Officer and Panel Manager.

The Business Manager will manage the Administration Officer and Placements Officer. The Placements Officer will liaise with supervising social workers regarding the suitability of placements and the Registered Manager will review and sign off on proposed placements

Finances will be outsourced to a part-time self employed individual.

### **8.2 Qualifications, experience and responsibilities**

The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding, compliance and procedures are adhered to. The Registered Manager holds a Degree in Childhood and Youth Studies as well as a Masters in Social Work. They have worked with children and young people in various capacities for the past 12 years. They have worked within the fostering sector for the past three years and have a background in Child Protection.

The Business Manager has substantial experience in terms of direct work with young people and the management of agencies providing services for young people. She has worked in fostering for 14 years and as well as being a qualified teacher she holds a Masters in Business Administration."

The Director has ultimate responsibility for practice and business functions of the agency and is also the Responsible Individual.

Both Managers work closely together and depending on the area of responsibility are responsible for the development of policies, auditing, development of new services and research.

As we grow we will appoint a senior social worker for each area who will have at least 2 years fostering experience. All social workers are registered with Social Work England.

All independent staff will be subject to an enhanced police check and other references as required by the post. Safer recruitment practices will be adhered to in all recruitment.

### **8.3 Safer recruitment**

Apex is committed to ensuring that the welfare and safety of young people is paramount. All staff and independent contractors will be subject to an enhanced DBS and other checks and references depending on their role. They will also commit to policies which implement our vision to keep young people safe.

### **9.0 Contact Details**

All staff work remotely but the agency has its head office at;

Brickfield House, High Road, Thornwood, Epping, Essex CM16 6TH

The agency telephone number is 0333 044339

E-mail: [info@apexfostering.uk](mailto:info@apexfostering.uk)

Website: [www.apexfostering.com](http://www.apexfostering.com)

