



community  
foster care

# Statement of Purpose and Function





It takes a  
community  
to raise  
a child



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# Community Foster Care

## - an introduction

Community Foster Care is a charity established in 1998 and our purpose is to support children and young people to live in families. We predominantly do this by providing safe, supportive, and emotionally warm foster families to children and young people who need them. We also provide services aimed at supporting children, young people, and their families.

In 1998, CFC's founders had an idea to do things differently, challenging the status quo in fostering. Through an innovative and creative approach, CFC workers immersed themselves in the local communities and challenged the existing ideas about who could foster. The aim was to support communities, provide local foster families for local children, working in areas of economic deprivation, providing employment, and improving skills. We are proud of our heritage. We believe in the potential of others; we celebrate our achievements, and we learn from our mistakes.

At the beginning, funded by the European Social Fund, CFC established itself by working in the communities of Coney Hill and Matson, both in Gloucester. We still have foster carers working with us today, 20 years on, that were recruited in this first campaign and retain strong links with these communities. Once the EU funding came to an end, Community Foster Care was registered as a charity and became independent of Gloucestershire County Council. It expanded its services in 2009 by opening another office in Workington (Cumbria), followed by an office in Lancaster in 2012. In 2016, Community Foster Care opened an office in Wiltshire.

Our charitable status is very important to us. We take our responsibilities, to support the communities in which we work, very seriously. We are committed to reinvesting any surplus in supporting the children we look after, their families and the communities in which they live.



“The staff are highly motivated, very child-focused and passionate about their work.”

[Read our Ofsted Reports here](#)

This Statement of Purpose and Function seeks to provide the reader with an accessible description of Community Foster Care. As required by law it will detail our Aims and Objectives, as well as our Services and Facilities. In addition to this, we hope that you gain a sense of CFC, about what is important and of our personality.

At CFC we are fiercely committed to our mission and values, and we are tenacious in seeking the very best for the children in our care. As well as our excellent Supervising Social Workers, we have a team of Placement Support Workers and Child Psychotherapists. CFC provides a range of engaging activities and opportunities for young people and is successful in promoting their voice.

In addition to providing foster care, we provide other services including youth services in Wiltshire, a family group conference service in North Somerset and work with families in Gloucestershire. These are delivered through the Community Family Care arm of our Charity.

Through our talented workforce we seek to work collaboratively to achieve our mission.



# Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our values drive our approach to our work, our reason for being and the way in which we work with children, families, and communities. These values will build our community culture and guide us in achieving our mission.

## Our Mission

To create a community that gives individuals the strength and foundation to realise a better future for young people and families.

Our Mission is the conscious actions everyone must do everyday to have the best chance of achieving our vision.

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## Our Vision

A world where all children and young people grow up in families rich in the essential ingredients required for them to realise their ambitions and dreams.



# Our Values

Our values are based on our archetypes. Our core brand values are the compass that points to the true North of our charity's success.

Values stand at the very core of our brand. They're the centre from which everything radiates – including our brand's look (design), message (voice), and relationships (customer service).



## Citizen

- We work to achieve the highest standards in everything we do.
- We believe that relationships built on integrity and trust are fundamental to our work.
- We are passionate about treating everyone with integrity and respect.



## Courage

- We will always stand up for what we believe is right for children and families.
- We will remain strong in our belief in the potential of all people.
- We will embrace challenge and critical reflection in the pursuit of developing practice, continuous learning and innovation.



## Creativity

- We believe that creativity is essential to our future success and therefore must be nurtured and valued.
- We believe diverse teams are most effective at working together to find solutions.
- We recognise that to be creative, to grow and to innovate, we must have the courage also to fail.



## Community Commitment

- We are committed to working in partnerships, building collaboration to enhance the quality of life for everyone.
- We believe in the power and value of communities to overcome challenges using sustainable methods.
- We are committed to promoting inclusive diverse communities to achieve our mission.



## Tenacity

- We will go above and beyond in the pursuit of children and young people's dreams and ambitions.
- We believe in sticking by children and young people and this is a vital ingredient in our practice.
- We understand our work is challenging and will test us, but believe that by working together as a charity, our commitment and tenacity will help us to achieve our goals.



## Ambition

- We understand that being ambitious for children and young people means releasing their potential and self-belief.
- Our ambition to provide young people with the best opportunity to make valuable contributions to their community and to have happy fulfilling lives means that we will put their needs first, even in the most testing circumstances.



# Aims & Objectives

## Community Foster Care details its overarching objectives in our Articles of Association

These can be summarised as follows:

2.1 Community Foster Care operates solely for the public benefit. These are our Charitable aims:

- (a) To operate a foster care agency in particular but not exclusively from social and economically deprived areas.
- (b) To support children and young people in need, by providing foster families, and / or other support and education.
- (c) To promote and protect the good health of children, young people, adults, and their families by providing training, education support and guidance to promote their establishment in life.
- (d) The relief of poverty.

## Our Legal status

Community Foster Care is a Charity and an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA), as defined under the Care Standards Act 2000. We are inspected by Ofsted. You can read our latest reports [here](#). Our Registered Charity Number is 1084124. Our Charity Commission page can be found [here](#). We are a voluntary agency, as defined by the 1989 Children Act and operate as a company limited by guarantee.

As a charity, we have a Board of Trustees. We do not have shareholders or other beneficiaries. As a charity, all our funds must go to progressing our objectives. This means all our funds are used to achieve our mission. Therefore, everything is invested back into children and young people, their families, and the communities in which we work.

## Our Community

Community Foster Care has community at heart. Our foster families, children and young people, our trustees and our staff together form a supportive accepting community. Supporting Children and Young People to overcome trauma and society's barriers is complex. To achieve our mission, we must be diverse, creative and commit to critical reflection and lifelong learning. We continue to strive toward these. We believe that the children and young people deserve people that are prepared to explore new ways of working to enable us to find ways to overcome the barriers that society has placed in their way. We therefore strive to cascade power and influence over CFC's direction to all its stakeholders, believing that CFC is in the stewardship of all that care about it and its work. As a result, children, young people, foster families, and staff are all represented in CFC's governance forums.

# (Aims & Objectives)



We also believe in the value of collaboration and partnership with communities and organisations where we share purpose. We believe by working together we are better able to achieve our mission examples of collaboration include:

- Active membership of the Fairer Fostering Partnership, a group of charitable and not-for-profit fostering agencies across the UK whose members look after over 2,000 children in care.
- We co-deliver with The Children's Family Trust, Skyrocket Training. A unique partnership founded on collaboration, innovation and co-production. We believe that building the capacity of the work force through high quality training is critical in the delivery of high-quality services.

To ensure Community Foster Care can continue to achieve its mission and objectives, we have an ambitious strategy called, 'Coming of Age', which recognises that we have been established for 21 years. The strategy considers six key threads to our mission and identifies strategic priorities. This defines our Aims and Objectives.

## Fostering Better Outcomes

Children and young people are our leaders. They are at the heart of all our decision making.

- 1.1 Children and young people benefit from greater stability within families and achieve better outcomes.
- 1.2 We enhance the overall awareness and understanding of children and young people.
- 1.3 We challenge some existing practices and seek to explore alternative and more effective means for promoting children and young people.

## Talented Inspired People

All Stakeholders invested and power devolved

- 2.1 There is a tangible transformation in the culture of CFC in which all stakeholders feel engaged and have contributed to a shared understanding of the culture. In turn, this culture facilitates the achievement of our mission.
- 2.2 Pay and reward at CFC is fair for all and promotes the values and culture defined in this plan. People want to work with us and for us.
- 2.3 CFC's workforce becomes more diverse and empowered and this fuels creativity and shared ownership.

## Robust Efficient Systems

We maximise the benefits of our Digital investment.

- 3.1 Information and Data is stored, maintained, and reported on accurately. This enables us to improve on our success and report accurately on the impact of our work.
- 3.2 We enable foster carers to access our systems.
- 3.3 We maximise the potential of our digital investment, seeking new and effective ways of achieving our mission through digital tools.

## Connecting Children and Families

By mastering our message and channels of communication and by embodying our values, we build communities.

- 4.1 We extend the reach of our fostering by 10% per year.
- 4.2 We retain our foster carers for longer.
- 4.3 We engage in new communities and build enduring partnerships with them.

## Effective use of Resources

We can harness the right resources to achieve our mission.

- 5.1 Ensure staff resources are fit for achieving the strategic plan.
- 5.2 Have a unified and shared Community Foster Care approach to fostering.
- 5.3 Our property portfolio is fit for the delivery of our strategy.

## Charity Viability

We have the potential to achieve our mission

- 6.1 Meet CFC's reserves policy and grow an investment fund for meeting CFC's mission.
- 6.2 Ensure clarity across stakeholders about contractual requirements and ensure we extract maximum value.
- 6.3 Carefully develop our fostering and other Childrens' Services offers into marketable packages.



# Types of Fostering

“I love feeling I am making a difference and helping someone be the best person they can be”

Jenny Owen, Foster Carer

## Short Term Fostering

Short-term fostering placements provide homes for children and young people while plans are made for their future. These placements are sometimes required in an emergency or at very short notice where children and young people are often placed directly from home. The placement may be needed for a few days, weeks, or months. The child’s social worker will carry out an assessment and determine a care plan for the child. Foster carers providing these placements must work closely with the professional network around the child as well as working closely with the child’s family including supporting contact particularly where returning home is the plan.

## Long Term Fostering

This type of fostering is where the child or young person remains with the foster carer until independence and adulthood. The child will remain ‘looked after’ by the local authority and will continue to receive support from their social worker. The child will be regarded as a permanent member of the fostering family, be provided with stability and security, and enjoy all the benefits of being part of a loving family until they are ready to live independently as an adult.

## Planned Breaks

Sometimes foster carers and parents need a short break from their caring responsibilities. For those children with additional needs or complex behavioural and emotional difficulties, these breaks are often seen as important to maintain placement stability and so will form part of a child’s care plan. In these circumstances, we will seek to provide short breaks with an alternative foster carer. These breaks will be planned and will usually be for a weekend or for a few days during school holidays.

## Sibling placements

These placements allow brothers and sisters to stay together. We know that relationships with our brothers and sisters are potentially the most long lasting of our lives. Siblings can provide comfort security and reassurance. For children who have experienced trauma, staying with their brothers and sisters can be a protective factor as they come into foster care.

We require foster carers who can care for sibling groups, often of 2 or 3, but occasionally we need to provide placements for larger sibling groups. This type of fostering requires carers who have the physical space within their home, as well as being able to look after children of different ages and recognising different personalities and characters.

## Parent and Child Fostering

Parent and child fostering provides a placement to a parent alongside their child. Parent and child arrangements are varied. Often the placement is required for a young parent and their baby, however, these placements can involve both mothers and fathers and include babies alongside older siblings. The foster carer provides support to the parent to care for their child. Their work will contribute to the Local Authority’s assessment as to parents’ ability to live independently with their child.

The level of support needed can be different depending on each individual case. For example, some parents may need very little support. Other parents may require a higher level of practical support and monitoring.

The length of parent and baby fostering placements can vary. Typically, they last for twelve weeks but sometimes these placements can be required for longer dependent upon circumstances.





# Matching Families with Children & Young People



Community Foster Care is committed to promoting stability for children and young people and to reducing the number of unplanned endings experienced by children and young people. We recognise that a key factor in achieving this is that we make a good match between child / young person and foster family. This matching process starts with a thorough fostering (Form F) assessment. The process provides us with a good understanding as to where a fostering family's strengths and skills lie and a clearer idea as to what will work best for the family.

We work closely with Local Authorities in each region where we operate. We have a dedicated placements officer who monitors all the referrals that come into the agency. This ensures we can respond in a timely way. Any potential matches will be discussed with the foster carer and their supervising social worker. We will request as much information as there is available and share this with the foster carer so we can consider together whether the carer is best placed to meet the child(ren)'s needs. We also discuss any potential placements with the social workers of any other children already in placement.



Before we make a placement, we consider the needs of the child and think about whether any additional placement support is required, such as 1:1 time with our placement support workers or regular consultation for our carers with one of our psychotherapists. We understand that ensuring good support around the child and carer will give placements the best chance to be successful.



# Support For Foster Carers

## Foster Carer Supervision

Community Foster Care is committed to ensuring staff and all foster carers receive effective supervision.

Supervision supports the development of a positive culture in Community Foster Care and focuses on continuous improvement and consistent practice helping to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families.

Supervision is an opportunity to problem solve together, enabling all parties to feel safe to flag problems or identify difficult emotions whilst sharing the objective of wanting to get things right for the children and young people involved.

Every foster family has an allocated supervising social worker to work alongside them. We ensure that social workers' caseloads remain manageable so they can give the time and attention needed to their fostering families.

Contact between foster carers and their supervising social worker is not limited to monthly formal supervision. Community Foster Care encourages regular and effective communication between foster carers and their social workers to ensure that carers feel well supported to look after the children in their care and meet the demands of the fostering task.

## Annual Review

All foster carers are subject to an annual review, which is an appraisal of the preceding year and an opportunity to reflect on what has gone well and what has been more challenging. The review takes the form of a meeting. The review will consider the views of the carers as well as feedback from the children who have been looked after by the carers during the year, their social worker and the carers' own supervising social worker. We will also often seek views from other people involved in the child's life, such as their teachers or members of their family. The review will consider the carers' strengths and skills, identify any areas for training and development and make recommendations as to the approval terms for the following year.

## Support Groups

Carer support groups play an integral role within the agency and ensure that foster carers and staff feel they are part of a mutually supportive and respectful community. Relationships are valued and support groups provide the space for these relationships to be nurtured and preserved. The groups take place every month and provide the opportunity to reflect and learn together, sharing our experiences and learning from the experiences and knowledge of others. Groups are usually held through the day, with some occasional evening sessions. We often invite speakers from other organisations to come along and present information. We also regularly invite our Consultant Psychotherapists to lead workshops on topics of interest and help us reflect and problem solve together.

## Duty System

All our fostering families have their own supervising social worker; caseloads are low which enables each family to receive a high level of support from their worker. We understand that it is important for carers to have access to advice and support at the time it is needed. We operate a duty system across the whole agency to ensure that foster carers can always speak to a qualified social worker if their own worker is ever unavailable.

## Support Workers

Community Foster Care is committed to the provision of skilled attuned support workers to support children, young people, and their foster families. We know from our work, how much these relationships are valued by these people. We also see evidence that these relationships support Children and Young People to develop and grow and overcome challenges.

## Out of Hours Support

All our foster carers have access to a support and advice service out of hours. Our supervising social workers work on a rota basis to provide telephone support and advice 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. There is also always a manager available out of hours to support the social workers and provide further advice or decision making as necessary.

# Training & Development

CFC is enthusiastic about providing access to high quality training and on-going support to ensure that everyone can reach their potential. We support carers to take responsibility for their own learning and we need carers who have a desire to continually improve practice to get things right for our children.

Community Foster Care always works to achieve the highest standards of practice. It is, therefore, essential that our own learning and development is a continual process.

Reflective practice underpins every aspect of our work, learning from our own experiences as well as sharing experiences of good practice with others. To that end, CFC employs two Consultant Psychotherapists who work alongside staff and carers supporting our mission.

Our learning and development programmes are based on evidence informed practice with a focus on attachment theory. This supports us to provide sensitive and appropriate care which can help children and young people recover from trauma and damage, helping them build positive relationships with others.

Community Foster Care delivers a comprehensive Learning and Development Framework. This Framework sets out the induction and mandatory courses carers are required to complete to provide the foundation of skills and knowledge required. There is then opportunity for carers to attend additional progressive courses to further expand their knowledge and skills, developing areas of expertise as they move through their fostering journey.

The training is provided in a range of formats including face to face workshops, 1:1 sessions, reflective supervision, online courses and remote learning and independent study. Each year we provide an annual training programme. Lifelong learning is an important principle and is fundamental if we are to be successful in ensuring continuous improvement.



## Child and Adult Psychotherapists

Whilst hugely rewarding, we recognise how complex and challenging our work can be. It is critical that we collaborate with a diverse range of skills to enable reflection and problem solving. As a result, we are committed to providing experienced Child and Adult Psychotherapists to support our work. These professionals provide regular groups and training for foster carers and staff as well as 3-way sessions or direct work with Children and Young People.

## Preparation to foster

Everyone applying to foster is required to complete our preparation training which serves as an introduction to the fostering task. We use the 'Skills to Foster' programme which has been designed by the Fostering Network. We usually run this course over 3 days and the course can be delivered through the week, in the evenings or at a weekend. We include introductions to other members of our fostering community including our placement support workers and consultant child psychotherapists. There is also an opportunity to meet some of our carers as they co-deliver sessions and share their own experiences, bringing the content 'to life' with some real-life examples.

We also run additional preparation groups for an applicant's own children as well as providing one to one sessions to support them in starting to think about what it means to live in a fostering family. Foster carers' children play a really important role in the lives of the children we look after. We ensure that we provide them with all the information and support they need from the outset as they are on a fostering journey too.

# (Training & Development)



## Post Approval

### Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards

All approved foster carers are required to complete the Training, Support and Development programme (TSD). The TSD programme is designed to support and equip carers to meet the needs of the children they are to look after. All carers are required to complete this training within 12 months of their approval as set out in the National Minimum Standards.

### Induction.

Carers are required to complete a total of 6 induction courses during their first year of approval. These courses are designed to provide every foster carer with an introduction to a range of subjects essential to the fostering role. The courses are subject to regular review and updates and currently comprise:

- Introduction to CFC
- Safer Caring, health, and wellbeing
- Safeguarding
- Promoting positive behaviour
- Recording, storing, and sharing sensitive information
- Medication

Our induction programme complements and supports the completion of the Training, Support and Development programme (TSD).



## Mandatory Courses

As well as the initial induction, each approved carer will be required to complete a range of mandatory training courses. The course topics and content is variable but will fall within the following 8 topic areas:

- First Aid
- Promoting Educational Attainment
- Child development
- Safeguarding
- Therapeutic development
- Administering medication
- Equality and diversity
- Staying put



## Progressive Courses

Foster carers will also have the opportunity to attend additional training to further develop their knowledge and skills in specialist areas, such as children's mental health or therapeutic parenting approaches. Each year our foster carers, with the support of their supervising social workers, will discuss their learning and development needs and formulate a plan for the forthcoming year. As such the courses considered within the Progressive arena will, by definition, not be standardised.



# Children and Young People as Leaders



Children and young people that are part of a CFC family can get involved in shaping the organisation in several ways. We have an annual young people's survey that enables all young people to share their views on how they are doing as well as annual activity-based consultation events for young people to feedback on the organisation.

We have a participation group made up of young people from across the different regions that lead on consultation and participation activities; their creativity and ambition enable us to shape and improve everything we do. The group hold their own budget for each region and decide how it should be spent to benefit young people in each area.



Children and young people support the development of the organisation by:

- Delivering foster carer training
- Reviewing key documents for young people and giving their 'stamp of approval'
- Being involved in the recruitment of staff
- Organising activities for young people across the organisation
- Being involved in key organisational changes
- Having their own budget to spend on benefiting young people

Recently children and young people have supported us by redesigning the annual review forms and updating the children's guides which provide essential information, including key contacts and how children and young people can make a complaint when they first join a CFC family. They have also been involved in reviewing CFC's values and evolving our brand.



# Foster Carer Recruitment

We believe in the potential of people and this is always our starting point when we work with people to become foster carers.

We welcome people from all backgrounds, communities, and circumstances. We believe that children belong in families and their needs are varied. Our children and young people need a wide range of family types.

To join our community of carers;

You may be:

- single, married or divorced
- male or female
- a parent with young or grown-up children
- someone who has never had children
- a single parent
- in a same-sex relationship
- employed or unemployed (employed people who need to work full-time will be considered for respite foster care, i.e. weekends and school holidays to support other foster carers)
- you may have a criminal record for non-violent offences or cautions in the past

You will need:

- a good-sized spare room for each child
- evidence of parenting skills, either with your own children or other people's
- one person based at home if you want to foster full-time
- alignment with our values
- a commitment to lifelong learning and being open to a challenge
- a commitment to working in partnership with the child's birth family and professionals
- an ability to stand up for children and young people and promote them
- a willingness to be an active part of our fostering community



## Recruitment Process

We understand that contemplating fostering occurs over a long period. When an individual makes the decision to reach out to us for more information, they can be reassured that our response will be supportive and enabling. We understand that the first step can be the most difficult and can feel quite daunting. We take the process at the enquirer's pace and understand that often, people need more time to consider taking their application further – our recruitment is driven by building trusting relationships, not by process.

After the first contact is received, one of our social workers will contact the enquirer by telephone for an initial discussion. This is an opportunity for both parties to learn more about each other, what we value, how we have come to be where we are and what we are about now. Following this call, if both parties agree, we will complete a home visit, we will provide more information about the agency and the role, we will ask questions about motivation, relevant experience and skills and personal circumstances. We will also offer the individual the opportunity to speak with foster carers already approved with our agency. A person's suitability will be considered in line with the safe recruitment requirements detailed in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. We will also consider the needs of the service with regard to the types of foster placements we provide.

If the person making the enquiry would like to proceed further and Community Foster Care feels confident as to their suitability, we will invite the enquirer to make an application.

# (Foster Carer Recruitment)

## Application and Assessment

Once an application has been received, the applicants will be allocated a qualified supervising social worker who will complete the assessment. The fostering assessment we use is called a Form F, which is an assessment format and report developed by CoramBAAF and widely used by fostering agencies. The Form F assessment is comprehensive and covers areas including (but not limited to) family background and childhood, adult life and employment, current and previous relationships, support networks, other people living in the household, the importance of identity and diversity, relevant child care and parenting skills and motivation to foster. The applicant's own children will be fully involved in the assessment process too. It is crucial to the success of any future placement that a carer's children are well prepared and supported in their fostering role.

The assessment takes place in the applicant's home over a series of visits and will involve all members of the household. The process should take no more than 6 months to complete. It is often completed within 3 to 4 months but this is dependent on a number of factors, not least the availability of applicants.

The assessment is also informed by a range of statutory checks and references which are requested alongside the home visits. These references include employment and personal references, local authority checks, DBS criminal record disclosures, a home health and safety report, an assessment of any pets and a full medical. The assessing social worker will discuss which checks will be undertaken and their significance with the applicant as part of them giving their informed consent.

The Form F process not only considers a person's suitability to foster, but also what type of fostering they would be best suited to, in line with their skills and experiences. For example, the report would make recommendations as to what age group of child the applicant would be best matched with and whether they would provide short or long term placements.

Once the home visits have been completed, the final report will be prepared and shared with the applicants for their comment and signature. The Form F will make recommendations as to the applicants' suitability and the terms under which they should be approved as carers. Applicants will also have a further final visit from a senior social worker or manager from the agency. The purpose of this visit is one of quality assurance and to give a second opinion as to the recommendations made within the Form F report.

Once all the checks and references are completed and the report has been agreed and signed by all parties, the Form F report will be shared with the Foster Panel for their consideration and recommendations.



# Quality Assurance

Community Foster Care is committed to developing a culture of ongoing learning, reflection, and review. The work we undertake is complex and highly skilled and it is crucial that we enable all parts of the organisation to develop and refine our practice to improve the positive impact that we have on children and young people.

We seek to achieve this in the following ways:

- The Registered Manager monitors a range of key indicators across the service and on a quality basis assesses how effective the service is at meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering. In addition to this, key themes and statistics are presented to the trustees through Subgroups.
- On an annual basis we review key information about the service and complete a full review of the quality of the service we are providing. This information is detailed in the Quality of Care report, which is shared with the Trustees and then with Ofsted.
- Managers and workers review information relating to the journey of children and young people and the impact of our interventions. We use Community Foster Care's Outcomes Framework tool to support this work. We do this to consider and learn how we can improve our practice.
- Our psychotherapists also help us to reflect, identify themes and learn from good practice and areas we need to develop.
- We promote effective supervision of staff. We strive to ensure supervision provides a space for critical reflection and analysis and is supportive. We review the supervision experience to ensure it is effective for all.
- Community Foster Care's policies are regularly reviewed, and we engage an independent organisation to verify that they are reflective of the most up to date guidance and legislation.
- We actively seek the views of foster carers and children and young people through annual surveys. The results are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team. A plan is agreed, and feedback is given to our community.
- Community Foster Care is a member of The Fostering Network, CoramBAAF, The Fairer Fostering Partnership and the Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers. This means we work together with other agencies to network and help us to be informed about current issues and research in fostering.

### Our Independent Fostering Panel

Having an Independent Panel to consider the ongoing approval of our Foster Carers is an important and effective strand of our Quality Assurance. The role of our Fostering Panel is to make recommendations to the agency about whether people applying to foster should be approved and the terms of their approval. We provide the panel members with the Fostering Assessment report which sets out the agency's recommendations, the number and age range of children and the type of foster placement they would be best suited to provide, whether this is short term, long term, parent and child or planned break fostering, or a combination.

Panel members consider new applications to foster as well as carers' annual reviews.

Community Foster Care operates one Panel for the agency and we have an independent panel chair who is very experienced in the role. Panel membership is made up of individuals who have a wide range of relevant experience, both personal and professional. Panel members are independent of the agency. Details of our panel members can be found [here](#).

Fostering Panels take place once a month. They sit in both the Lancaster and Gloucester office locations in alternate months to allow for ease of accessibility for carers and staff located in those regions.

We understand that the panel process can be a daunting experience for some. Our aim is to provide a welcoming and friendly environment where people are supported to give of their best. Our policies and procedures have been developed in line with this transparent approach and the feedback we receive from those who attend panel is very positive.

Once the panel has made its recommendations, the application and the panel recommendation are then considered by our Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who makes the final decision as to suitability to foster and the terms of approval. The ADM decision should be received within 7 days of the Panel in line with the National Minimum Standards (14.91).



# Governance Structure and Senior Leadership Team

Community Foster Care is governed by a Board of Trustees. The trustees are responsible for CFC's culture, strategy, management of risk and for ensuring all our endeavours focus on our mission and objectives.

The Board of trustees have delegated some responsibilities to three key subgroups:

- The Finance and Resources Committee - including the strategic elements of Commercial Viability - Effective use of resources
- The Fostering Quality Assurance Group - including the strategic elements of Connecting more Children with Families - Robust Efficient Systems
- Promoting Good Outcomes, People and Safeguarding Group - including the strategic elements of Fostering Better Outcomes - Talented Inspired People

The groups are chaired by Trustees. A range of stakeholders including at least two trustees sit on these groups.

The Board currently has 9 members:

### Charles Wade, Chair of Trustees

For over twenty years, Charles served as a full-time judge in the west of England, for much of that time concentrating on cases involving the welfare of children and for several years in the post of Designated Family Judge in Wiltshire.

He retired in 2014 and lives in Gloucestershire with his family which includes eleven grandchildren. Charles joined the Board in November 2014 and took over as Chair in April 2017.

### Derek Conaty, Deputy Chair of Trustees

Derek is married with three adult daughters and five grandchildren.

During his working life, Derek saw the important role that fostering has in some children's lives and the great work that foster parents do. He also saw first-hand the extremely difficult and challenging circumstances that can affect some families. He hopes to be able to bring some of his experience of dealing with these situations as a GP and in the learning disability service to his role as a trustee.



# (Governance Structure and Senior Leadership Team)



## Mariana Straton, Trustee & ADM

Mariana is a Trustee as well as the Agency Decision Maker.

Mariana was already aware of Community Foster Care's reputation for innovation and forward-thinking before she became a Trustee. What has impressed her most since joining the Board is the fact that not only has she been listened to, but positive action has been taken as a result.

*"I was aware that Community Foster Care had gone through some significant changes and was very much on the up. Because of my past experience with looked-after children and my current strategic role in the local authority, I knew I could contribute to their work. I was also very interested in learning more about Community Foster Care's business model as a charity," she said.*

## Jennie Dwight, Trustee

After leaving school, Jennie spent eight years as a Police Constable before setting up her own driving school. Eventually, a love of children led her to undertake a teaching degree at Gloucestershire University.

*"I see many links between the work of the group and my own role of Head Teacher. Ultimately we share the goal of working with families and young people to offer help and support."*

Jennie joined Community Foster Care as a Trustee in 2015.

## Joanna Jansen, Trustee

Joanna and her husband began fostering teenagers for the Local Authority adolescent scheme in 1981 when their first two birth children were infants. After two placements and two more birth children, there was no more room in the house, but when the two elder children left home, they decided to return to fostering and joined CFC in 2004. Since then they had one long term, and close to thirty young people placed for emergency or respite, lasting anything from one night to several months.

During the interim Joanna was a School Governor, as well as working for the Planned Environment Therapy Trust, a charity which supported therapeutic environments for children and adults. She is a Panel Member for CFC and another not-for-profit fostering agency. When they retired as carers in 2014, she became a Trustee.

## Mary Cox, Trustee

I became a Trustee with CFC in March 2021, having worked for over 20 years as a social worker within the field of fostering. I live in Gloucestershire with my husband, with my two young grandchildren and close family members living nearby in Cheltenham. I greatly enjoy spending time with my family and friends who live both locally and across the country.

In February 2021 I retired from my previous role as the agency decision maker in a large national IFA and realised I now had the time to become involved in local community and or voluntary work.

I have followed the progression and development of CFC during the past 10 years that I have lived in Gloucestershire with great admiration. I have huge respect and regard for the tireless commitment

foster carers show towards young people and I appreciate the important role charities such as CFC play in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people. The values and vision of the charity are inspirational, and the aims appear achievable.

## Stephenie Malone, Trustee

Stephanie joined Community Foster Care as a trustee in 2019. Also employed by Harrison Clark Rickerbys, Stephenie is an experienced Employment solicitor, who advises a wide range of health and social care organisations on employment and HR matters. She is also a Mum to her daughter.

Stephenie was drawn to CFC by the ethos of inclusivity of the community. She is passionate about influencing the way in which employers address employment of their staff in a positive way, helping them to navigate challenges and obstacles.

## The Senior Leadership Team

Community Foster Care's Senior Leadership team works closely to deliver the strategy and to manage operational matters. It comprises:

### Dan Whitson Jones – Business Development Manager

Dan is responsible for the functions of Business Support, Human Resources, Financial Control and Marketing and Recruitment. This brings together the back-office functions which are fundamental to delivering a smooth operation that is responsive to the needs of children and families.

### Sasha Hart – Service Manager

Sasha manages the Support and Family Care services. This includes our Family Group Conference service and Youth Services. Sasha and her team also lead on the participation of children and young people and ensure their voices are heard effectively in the organisation.

### Emma Weaver – Registered Manager

Emma, as Registered Manager, holds operational responsibility for the Fostering Service, ensuring we remain compliant with the Fostering Regulations and achieve the National Minimum Standards. She oversees all the Supervising Social Workers and ensure we continue to reflect and review our working practice in the pursuit of lifelong learning. [EmmaW@communityfostercare.co.uk](mailto:EmmaW@communityfostercare.co.uk)

### Mark Kingston – Chief Executive Officer

Mark oversees all operations on behalf of the trustees and works with the Senior Leadership team to deliver the Charity's Strategy. A foundation to this work is the time taken to ensure that the Charity's culture reflects our values. [markk@communityfostercare.co.uk](mailto:markk@communityfostercare.co.uk)

# Feeding back – Compliments or complaints

Community Foster Care believes that we will only achieve our mission by learning together and reflecting on our experiences. We also believe that to enable children and families to overcome the challenges we face; we must explore new ways of working and be prepared to fail in the pursuit of wanting to succeed.

Therefore, we fundamentally believe that sometimes we will not deliver to the standards rightly expected. Feedback and learning opportunities, whether positive or negative, enables us to review and learn and are welcomed. We believe that people who are courageous enough to let us know about their experiences are taking time to help us improve.

As a result, we want to make it as easy as possible for people to feed back. Should you want to make a complaint or provide feedback of any nature, please speak to any member of staff. You can call us on 0800 0124 278 or email: [info@communityfostercare.co.uk](mailto:info@communityfostercare.co.uk)

We have a Complaints and Representations Policy and Procedure which is in line with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and is available to view [here](#). The policy was updated in 2019 and is available to all. We view complaints about our service very seriously and provide a transparent process for dealing with them.

Date Issued: 1st May 2021

For more information or contact details please see our website:

<https://www.communityfostercare.co.uk/>



Every young  
person has  
the right to a  
bright future.

