



Statement of Purpose

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Introduction

Channels & Choices Therapeutic Fostering Limited (company number - 08377728) is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 2006. We are an independent fostering service, and we are regulated and inspected by Ofsted. Our most recent Ofsted inspection was undertaken in August 2024 and the service was judged to be 'Good.'

It is a requirement of the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services that each fostering agency produces a Statement of Purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements, how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met and good outcomes achieved for all children in its care.

It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide which is provided to all children, subject to the child's age and understanding at the point of placement.

This statement is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is publicly available on our fostering website.

A copy of this statement is also lodged with Ofsted. The statement is updated and amended annually.

How our journey started

Channels & Choices was founded in 2005 by three qualified social workers with a shared passion for improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people. Through their professional experience, they recognised gaps in existing services and were driven by a belief that every child deserves the opportunity to feel safe, valued, and supported to achieve their full potential. This commitment continues to shape the organisation's vision and practice today.

Over the years, Channels & Choices has built a strong reputation for delivering high-quality therapeutic care. The organisation has expanded to provide a holistic range of services, including The Sallygate School, a Department for Education-registered school, and a specialist in-house therapeutic team. This therapeutic approach has developed significantly since 2008, leading to registration as a Therapeutic Community with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Consortium of Therapeutic Communities, and the National Centre for Therapeutic Residential and Foster Care.

In 2013, Channels & Choices established its fostering service to provide children with nurturing family-based care through its unique 'Stepping Stone' model. The service was created to support children moving on from residential care when they are ready, reflecting our belief that every child should experience positive relationships, stability, and a genuine sense of belonging.

Director's Statement

"At Channels and Choices Therapeutic Community, we are committed to providing children in our care with safe, stable and nurturing family environments where they can thrive, grow and achieve their full potential. We recognise that many children referred to our service have experienced early life trauma and adversity, often resulting in complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. Through our therapeutic approach, we aim to understand each child's experiences and provide personalised support that promotes resilience, wellbeing and positive life outcomes.

Our experienced fostering and therapeutic teams work in close partnership, creating a fully integrated service centred on the needs of each child. By working collaboratively with foster carers, local authorities and other professionals, we ensure continuity of care, seamless transitions and the highest quality support for the children and foster families we serve".

National Legislative and Policy framework

Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Agency is run in accordance with the principles outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (as amended 2013 & 2015)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010(amended 2013 & 2015)
- Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (Amendments) 2015
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving care) Act 2000
- Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations 2004: Fostering Services July 2013
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Data Protection Act 2018 and United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) 2021.

This SOP is available to suitable individuals upon request. This SOP is reviewed annually, and the Registered Manager will keep this SOP under review and where appropriate revise. All amended versions will be shared with

- His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (CIECSS, - Ofsted)
- Any person working for or in partnership with Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Service, members of the public, local authorities and any child or young person placed with one of our foster carers, and any parent of that child or young person via the agency's Website.

Our Vision

Every child deserves a safe, loving home, a great education, and a future they can believe in. Channels & Choices will be the most trusted therapeutic community in the South East, where children and young people with emotional difficulties and behaviour that challenge experience stability, healing, and learning—supported by adults who live our values and by systems that are robust, ethical, and sustainable.

Our values

- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Kind
- Accountable
- Supportive

Our aims and objectives

A centre of excellence

We strive to be a centre of excellence in therapeutic fostering services, and we encourage each and every child to reach their full potential through providing them with a safe, stable and consistent family environment. We encourage the children's personal growth considering their ethnicity, culture, religion and sexual orientation. We recognise through documented research that a child's needs are best met by a nurturing family and we are committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family with a well-matched foster placement.

Developing a secure base

We aim for all young people to develop a secure base that will equip them for moving forward with their lives. The development of meaningful relationships is essential for this to happen.

All of our approved foster carers are encouraged, trained and supported to help children reach their full potential through evidencing best practice.

In order to achieve these aims we have set the following core objectives:

1. To provide high quality therapeutic foster care placements where each child will have the opportunity for stability, security and a warm, safe caring environment within families that best meet their identified needs.
2. To recruit carers from all backgrounds in order to meet the ethnical, cultural and religious needs of children and young people referred to Channels & Choices.
3. To develop our services from feedback received and actively listen to the voice of our children and young people.
4. To ensure all foster carers have access to training, guidance and the support of an appropriately qualified and experienced supervising social worker and/or Social Work Assistant at all times.
5. To offer 24-hour support for foster carers, children and young people.
6. To promote placement stability by utilising the skills and resources of the therapeutic community such as our in-house therapy team and school.
7. To promote family time with the birth family and significant others and to encourage and facilitate this as appropriate.
8. To work in close partnership with Local Authorities to promote and safeguard the best interests and welfare of the child or young person.

Our therapeutic framework

Our therapeutic framework is based upon psychodynamic theory and is heavily influenced by attachment and systemic theory. Our therapeutic community strives to provide a holistic therapeutic environment for each child. All members of our therapy team work in collaboration to promote Channels & Choices' underpinning therapeutic framework and ethos.

A referral pathway is in place for the fostering and therapy team to collaboratively identify any potential therapeutic needs of children or specialist support/training for foster carers.

Foster carers:

We follow a clear process at the point of the approval of foster carers; this involves a handover meeting between the assessing social worker, the allocated Therapist, foster carers and Supervising Social Worker following a positive recommendation from the fostering panel to discuss future support plan.

Our extensive external and in-house specialist training, reflective six weekly support groups (POD) facilitated by therapists and supervising social workers, and access to a multidisciplinary therapy team provides a robust model of holistic support and individual specific intervention for foster carers. We believe that reflection and sharing is a huge resource which allows foster carers to develop and broaden their understanding and skill base thus our therapy team also works directly with our foster carers in individual sessions.

Children:

Any required assessments for the children are completed according to individual need following a "formulation process" which may include psychological, psychiatric, occupational therapy and/or speech and language therapy and will inform how we (Channels & Choices and carers) will meet the children's needs.

Therapeutic Services are provided through our in-house therapy department which includes a psychiatrist, creative therapists specialising in play, art and dance movement, integrative counsellors, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. We can also provide relational and attachment-based interventions which may include- Theraplay, Systemic Family Therapy Practice, and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP).

Therapeutic support is provided dependent on individual need. This can be done at each child's own pace and creatively amongst the adults that care for them.

From the outset, we make sure that children are well matched with suitable foster carers in order to meet their emotional and developmental needs.

Staff members:

Monthly Clinical reflective Supervision is provided to all foster team members.

Extensive external and in-house training is available for staff members throughout the year including P.A.C.E (Dr Daniel Hughes).

We work in partnership with Professor David Shemmings and have incorporated David's ARP (Attachment and Relationship-based Practice) project into our therapeutic framework. The ARP project is a core training course, and David directly trains all of our staff and foster carers.

As a "Trauma Informed" organisation, we also work with Dr Karen Treisman who is an award-winning Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist, organizational consultant, trainer, author, and trauma specialist.

Our current statistics

At present we have 29 families registered with us and 36 children in placement (July 2026).

The management structure and staff team

Ross Barnett, Executive Director and Responsible Individual

Ross began his career in 2001 working for the Local Authority as part of the specialist Looked After Children team. He also worked in the local authority's mental health and long-term child protection teams before setting up Channels and Choices with his colleagues in 2005. He is a qualified social worker registered with the HCPC and he also has a degree in Psychology.

Ross holds the registered manager's award for children and young people and undertook the role of registered manager within Channels and Choices at the company's inception in 2005. He also tutors professionals about managing conflict and appropriate physical interventions.

As well as being a company Director, Ross is also the Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker for the fostering service.

Steve Davison, Executive Director

Steve is a Director at Channels and Choices. He is a qualified social worker with a diploma in therapeutic childcare. Steve has over 20 years' experience working with children and their families. He has worked for the Local Authority as part of the Youth Service, Young Offenders team, Education Welfare and 7 years in a LA residential children's home. Following his qualification as a social worker Steve worked for the Council's Long- term & Child Protection Team before he helped form Channels and Choices.

Salwa Farid, Operational Director and Registered Manager

Salwa has been a qualified social worker since 1994 and has extensive experience working with children and their families in different statutory settings (ie: Fostering, Adoption, Professional Standards, Quality Assurance, Child Protection, Looked After Children, Placement, Commissioning, and Safeguarding Partnership). Before joining Channels and Choices therapeutic community, she worked as a Head of Children Social Services in different local authorities. Salwa joined the Fostering Team in 2023.

Channels & Choices Therapeutic Fostering also currently has the following staff team:

- 1 Social Work Assistant/Student Social Worker
- 3 Supervising Social Workers
- 1 Senior Practitioner
- 1 Deputy Manager
- 2 part time Administrators

Staff Recruitment

Recruitment takes place in accordance with organisational policies, safer recruitment practice and the workforce plan. Prior to appointment all staff are subject to an enhanced Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) check, references and validation of previous employment history. Thereafter, vetting through online DBS service and will occur on a three yearly basis. The records are held centrally on our HR Breathe system and available for relevant inspections on request. Registration with Social Work England is checked annually.

Supervision

All staff receive regular formal and informal supervision from their line manager. Staff receive regular "group supervision" supported by the Deputy and Registered Managers. Additionally, regular staff meetings and practice discussions are maintained. Staff supervision records are maintained in accordance with good practice, and all new staff must successfully complete a mandatory induction, which includes reviews, shadowing and mentoring. All core staff receive an annual appraisal, following their 6-month probationary period. The senior management team work closely together to discuss, review, and implement any further training needs that are highlighted during the appraisal process. This seeks to ensure that all staff have the qualifications, skills and knowledge to provide a high standard of support and care. Clinical supervision for support workers and social workers takes place once a month.

Induction

A four-week induction program is offered to all new staff. Mandatory and core training is expected to be completed within the probation period. The training comprises online training via The Training Hub and face to face training. All staff training is recorded on HR system and reviewed monthly by the fostering administrator and shared with the Registered Manager.

Standards of Care

Monitoring our performance

Channels & Choices are committed to meeting and then exceeding the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011).

The performance of the service is monitored through:

- Completion of monthly manager's report, and regulation 35 monitoring functions quarterly monitoring reports.
- Ofsted inspections.
- A systemic Quality Assurance Framework including performance data, collaborative audit, thematic audit, feedback, group supervision, individual supervision, and other quality assurance monitoring checks including external consultants.

Ofsted regulates and inspects our service. Their contact details are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
T- 03001231231
E- enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Safeguarding

The Channels & Choices safeguarding procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any Child Protection or safeguarding matter in line with national and local procedures.

Paulette Holliday, our Director of Safeguarding has been a Lead Associate Trainer with Kent Safeguarding Children's Multi Agency Partnership for the last 17 years delivering Child Protection & Safeguarding, CSE, Online Safety and Radicalisation (PREVENT) Training to professionals across Kent. She is also a Home Office approved trainer and she leads on many of the courses provided to our foster carers and staff from all departments of the community. Paulette liaises and consults with the appropriate host Local Authority's Social Services Department for any safeguarding queries or concerns.

Channels & Choices fostering safeguarding and safer care guidelines are applied to everyone and there are no exceptions.

Safer Care guidelines are in place to provide an assurance of safer practice and based on the following principles:

- We actively seek the views, wishes and feelings of young people including sufficient knowledge of individual communication needs.
- Children have unhindered access to a trusted, suitable adult.
- Children are aware of the help they can receive from independent advocacy services and relevant external agencies
- Staff and foster carers are trained in all aspects of safeguarding including contextual safeguarding and online safety.
- Staff and foster carers are alert to children's individual risks and vulnerabilities, and every child has an individual risk assessment and safety plan which is updated regularly.
- There are clear and accessible procedures for referring to safeguarding concerns.
- There are clear and effective allegations and complaints procedures which are readily accessible to all.
- Recruitment and assessment procedures are rigorous.
- There is effective supervision and support.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures are in place which are regularly revisited in supervision and team meetings.

- There is unequivocal respect for diversity, race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, and disability.
- Children who have been abused are offered support, which is defined by their individual needs, relevant plans, and effective collaborative working practice.
- Ensure the foster home is a safe space.
- Protect children and young people from abuse by adults and other children and young people in the household.
- Promote natural, healthy emotional and physical development, as well as educational achievement and opportunities that will enhance and expand life experiences and personal ambition.
- Children & young people feel valued and respected, and their self-esteem is promoted.
- All commissioned staff are checked and supervised when in contact with children and young people.

Our safeguarding policies give clear directions to staff about the expected behavior and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our young people. Our safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines are designed to be accessible and cover the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Countering Bullying (Inc. Cyberbullying)
- Countering Child Sexual and child criminal exploitation (CSE and CCE)
- Missing from care.
- Safer Recruitment
- Substance Misuse
- Whistleblowing
- County lines
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Safe medication handling
- Health and safety.
- Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

All policies including BCP are available on request.

Complaints

Channels & Choices are committed to providing the highest level of childcare and services to children and young people, their foster families and the placing authorities. We have a comprehensive complaints procedure which is given out to all young people and carers as part of the children's guide and Carer Induction. We will immediately investigate any concerns brought to our attention and where appropriate, take action to improve our performance. A copy of the procedure is available upon request.

Complaints to Ofsted

Complaints can also be made directly to Ofsted, which oversees the regulation and inspection of fostering services.

Contact Ofsted: Phone: Email: 0300 123 1231 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

In some cases, Ofsted may request that Channels and Choices investigate a complaint and reports the outcome. Alternatively, Ofsted may choose to carry out its own inspection.

Policies and procedures

Channels & Choices have developed a detailed and comprehensive policy and procedure manual which is hosted by Tri X. Newly approved Foster Carers will be supported to learn more about our policies and procedures during the Induction process.

Recruiting, selecting and approving Channels & Choices foster carers

Channels & Choices looks specifically for families who have the energy, commitment and cognitive ability to develop a professional career in therapeutic fostering. We encourage applications from diverse background and life experiences.

All interested individuals who contact Channels & Choices will have their enquiries recorded on a data base. If appropriate, we will send out an information pack and direct them to certain parts of our website in order to help the enquirer decide whether they feel they have the necessary skills to undertake the role of therapeutic foster carer.

Once the potential applicant has had an opportunity to find out about fostering and if they are still keen to apply, they will be asked to complete an application form. Usually, the application form will be left with the applicants following the initial visit/meeting, but it may be sent to the applicants at their request.

The initial visit

Our initial visits/meetings are undertaken by the Service's Senior Practitioner who has relevant knowledge, experience and skills. The aim of the initial visit is to help interested parties gain a clearer understanding of the role of a therapeutic foster carer, as well as for the social worker to undertake an initial assessment of the suitability of the enquirers. During the visit, applicants will be given further information about fostering. The roles and responsibilities of foster carers, the assessment process and support available to foster carers will be discussed.

Preparation training

Applicants will be invited to attend our 2 days preparatory training course which specially designed to meet our requirements as a therapeutic foster agency. This course is delivered by one of our supervising social workers alongside a therapist. The course focuses on the practical day to day skills that all foster carers need and offers a 'introduction to therapeutic fostering' session.

Moving on to assessment

Based on the feedback from the "Preparation Training" facilitators and the results of the initial checks (DBS, medical and Local Authority etc.), the Deputy and Registered manager will decide whether to proceed with the next stage of the assessment process, which involves allocating an independent social worker to assess the potential carers. The assessment will follow the Stage 1 and Stage 2 process as defined in the Assessment and Approval of Foster Carer Guidelines and Regulations (2013). For transferred foster carers, the assessment process can be completed concurrently (stage 1 and 2) following a satisfactory file read.

The assessment process

The assessment of prospective foster carers is undertaken based upon an amended version of CoramBAAF Form F report to ensure that it meets the requirement for a therapeutic fostering. The assessment is primarily about identifying whether an applicant or applicants are suitable to be approved as foster carers, to determine the kind of fostering for which they are suitable, and to consider any terms of approval. In our context we will specifically consider whether applicants have the qualities to develop as therapeutic foster carers.

Once the applicants have been through our in-depth assessment process including Pre-Panel online training courses (such Safeguarding, CSE, First Aid, PREVENT etc.), the statutory checks required and the assessment report has been finalised, the recommendations of the assessment will be presented to our fostering panel.

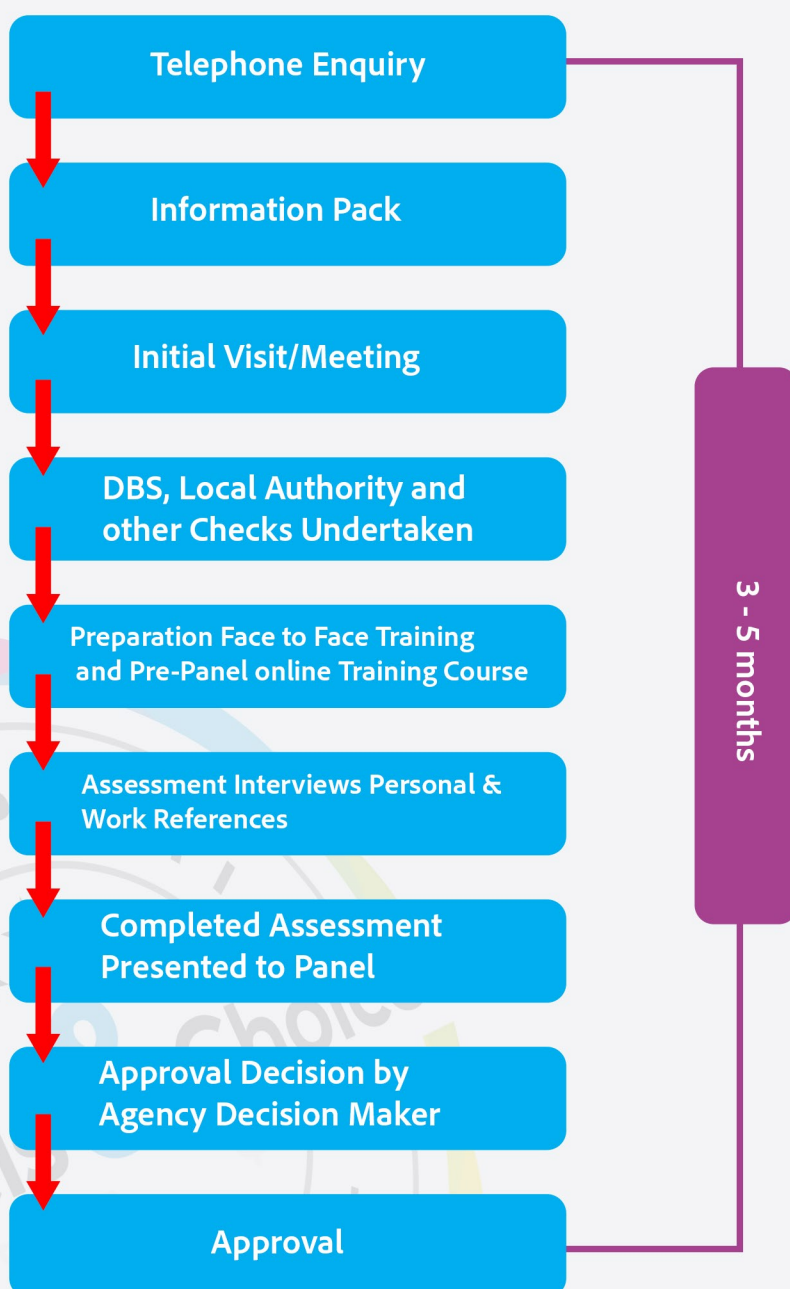
Fostering Panel

Our Fostering Panel consists of independent members with a range of skills and experience. We are consistently addressing the importance of ensuring our central list is as diverse as possible by actively recruiting members with expertise, skills, and experiences. We have thirteen members on our panel. Contact details are available from HR on request. Feedback from applicants and Social Workers' experience of the Panel is discussed with panel members as part of our development. Foster carers are presented to the fostering panel for their first review and then every other annual reviews.

Approval

Channels & Choices' fostering panel makes recommendations about the approval of prospective foster carer(s). The Agency Decision Maker considers the assessment documents and the minutes of the panel meeting including the recommendations, before making a decision about the approval of prospective foster carers. Following this decision the applicants will be notified first verbally by the Registered Manager, and then in writing. Where the decision is made to approve the applicants, the letter will specify any terms of approval. The ADM will make a decision within 7 days of receiving the panel meeting minutes and recommendations. Following approval, foster carers and Channels & Choices sign a written agreement (Foster Care Agreement) that sets out the terms and conditions of the fostering household's relationship with Channels & Choices therapeutic fostering.

Assessment and approval process flowchart



Joining the community & how we support our foster carers

The allocated Supervising Social Worker will attend the Fostering Panel with the prospective Foster Carers, and an experienced foster carer will also be appointed to support them once they are approved by the agency Decision Making. The Therapy Service Manager will allocate a named Therapist for the approved foster carers. Following their approval, successful applicants will join our professional team of foster families and become part of Channels & Choices therapeutic community. We support our carers 24 hours a day/7 day a week. A member of the fostering team is always at hand to help find the best way forward whether that be within or out of office working hours. We have a designated OOH telephone number and email address.

Regular contact with a supervising social worker

The team members at Channels & Choices are well trained and very experienced. Each foster family is allocated an experienced supervising social worker with support from a social work assistants to help guide and advise them. They will make regular phone calls to the family and undertake monthly visits, to help foster carers and the child with them get the most out of their fostering journey. They will also attend meetings with the carers and be the link between the family, the Local Authority Social Worker and Channels & Choices therapeutic community. The supervising social workers work very closely with the therapists who support the foster carers.

Support meetings with other foster carers

There are also six weekly foster carer support meetings (PODS), where carers can meet, talk to, support and learn from other foster carers and members of the fostering and therapy team. Carers are also supported to hold locality group; the purpose of this is to support carers to develop more local support networks and friendships which in turn benefit our children. These groups are not formally structured and are social groups. Groups are led by one carer who liaises with the other carers in their group around possible activities they would enjoy and availability (to ensure that most can attend at convenient dates). Groups are also encouraged to meet up with the children for bigger activities such as going to adventure park or a BBQ at someone's home.

Channels & Choices fostering activity days & events

Our foster families and children have given really good feedback about our 'fostering activity days'. We arrange regular activities and events for all of the family to take part in. Our regular activities include the Summer Breeze Festival, pumpkin picking, Halloween Event, egg hunt, as well as our annual community awards ceremony, and a visit to the pantomime at the Marlowe theatre in Canterbury.

Our therapy team is always there to help

Within the Channels & Choices community, our therapy team provide a huge amount of support to our foster carers. The team provide individual support to children and our foster families, as well as training across the community. Our foster carers tell us that they value the contributions of the therapists at the foster carer support group meetings or at individual supervisions.

Foster carer annual home reviews

At least one unannounced visit will be made to each foster family each year and a formal review of the foster carers' approval is carried out annually. During this review an Independent Social Worker considers whether a foster carer's approval should continue and if there should be any changes to their terms of approval. The views of foster carers, children, supervising social worker, local authority social workers and any other professionals involved are considered as part of this review process. The recommendations of the annual review will be considered by the fostering panel and/or the agency decision maker, depending on the circumstances. Fostering regulations make it clear that the first review report must be presented to panel. Foster carers are required to attend panel for their first review. After that, there is no legal requirement for a review to go back to panel, although the fostering service can choose to do so. At Channels and Choices, foster carers are presented to the fostering panel for their first review and then every other annual reviews.

Training for our foster carers

At Channels & Choices we passionately believe in having highly professional and skilled foster carers. We support our foster carers with ongoing training and support enabling our carers to provide the best care possible to the children and young people placed with them. As such we arrange various training courses throughout the year and arrange bespoke training according to the needs of our carers and the children placed with them.

We provide a wide and varied range of mandatory and optional courses in addition to bespoke workshops which are designed to help enhance the skills and knowledge of our foster carers. These courses compliment and build upon the Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards for foster care.

The DfE originally produced the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care.

All foster families have their own copy of the standards workbook guidance. The TSD standards are:

- Standard 1: understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people
- Standard 2: understand your role as a foster carer
- Standard 3: understand health and safety, and healthy care
- Standard 4: know how to communicate effectively
- Standard 5: understand the development of children and young people
- Standard 6: safeguard children and young people
- Standard 7: develop yourself

Channels & Choices provide opportunities for carers to demonstrate that they meet the standards as listed in the TSD workbook and this should be completed within 12 months from the carers' approval.

We believe that reflection and sharing as a group is a huge resource which allows foster carers to develop and broaden their understanding and skill base. Therefore, we often train as a community so that our foster carers may attend any course with colleagues from the fostering, therapy, residential or school teams.

We also have some of the country's experts in therapeutic childcare working alongside us at Channels & Choices. Our in-house therapy team and social work practitioners also provide Therapeutic Parenting Programme, innovative workshops and training to our foster carers and their families.

Our website gives further details about our training as well as videos of our carers talking about their experiences of fostering for Channels & Choices.

The 'stepping stones programme' and our range of placements

The 'Stepping Stones' programme remains a distinctive and important part of our therapeutic fostering service, supporting children to move successfully from residential care into family-based fostering environments when they are ready. The Stepping Stones placements for our children in residential homes, are shorter term; outcome focused pieces of work within our group living residential homes. We aim for a period of stability within our residential services and the community has worked collaboratively with the placing authority to agree a plan for a return to a fostering environment. Our Placements and Referral Manager monitors and co-ordinates the planning for children who have been placed in our 'stepping stones' programme in collaboration with the staff from the residential and fostering teams.

There is a huge amount of planning that goes into the transition, as we know historically transitions can be a tricky period for our children and young people. We match the children to one of our highly trained and skilled therapeutic foster carers whilst keeping the child's school, therapist and keyworkers as a consistent part of their lives.

Many of the children in our care have experienced a high number of foster placement breakdowns. Our service prevents further breakdown and offers local authorities a time limited and cost-efficient choice of placement for children who would have otherwise remained within a children's home indefinitely.

Foster carers are involved in the planning process and get to work with the existing team around the child.

We also accept direct referrals from local authorities for children requiring a therapeutic foster placement. This can include the following:

- Long term placements
- Short term placements
- Sibling groups
- Bridging placements
- Short breaks care arrangements
- Solo care arrangements, with experienced, skilled foster carers

We carefully consider the abilities and needs of each child, as well as the skills, abilities, developmental and support needs of the proposed foster carers before proposing a match to a placing local authority.

Our services for children placed with us

Channels & Choices has now been established for over 20 years and the welfare and outcomes of the children remain at the heart of what we do. As we have detailed throughout this document, we have a clear focus on training and developing our foster carers so that they can provide the best care for each child in placement with us.

Children's guide

Each child who is placed at Channels & Choices receives an age-appropriate children's guide. This guide is introduced and explained to them by their Supervising Social Worker (SSW) or their allocated support worker, ensuring they understand its contents in a supportive and age-appropriate way. We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of all children and young people. As such, the guide is available in a variety of formats and can be adapted using engaging activities and fun games to suit different learning styles and communication needs. Where required, it can also be translated into different languages or alternative formats to ensure full accessibility.

The purpose of the Children's Guide is to:

- Help children and young people understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Inform them of the support available while they are in foster care.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of the professionals involved in their care.
- Ensure they know how to raise concerns or make a complaint if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care. At CFS Care, we value and respect diversity.

At Channels & Choices, we value and respect diversity. We strive to ensure that every child feels heard, supported, and empowered from the moment they enter our care.

Functioning within a family

We aim to prevent the unnecessary cycle of placement breakdown through the 'stepping stone' programme. At the point of referral many of the children find it difficult to settle within a family environment when they are most under stress, which is usually exhibited through some kind of a high level of anxiety and risk-taking behaviour. Under "stepping Stone" model, we are able to stabilise and then successfully move the child from residential setting to a foster family rather than continue the cycle of disrupted foster placements as they are not yet ready.

However, under "Stepping Stone" model or external referrals, we realise that whenever young people enter the care system it is a very distressing time in their life. We strive to place children in safe and supportive home environments where they can thrive. We place children in our care at the heart of everything we do with the goal of changing futures for the better. Our careful matching process will determine if the Fostering Service can meet a child's needs. The experience and skills of our carers inform us of the recommended approval range during assessment. We use the information we have about a child and carefully match a carer's skill, knowledge, experience, and ability to meet that child's needs, along with the support the agency can provide to the placement. We aim for our placements to begin with planned introductions between carers and children. Ideally this would happen in person, but where this is not possible video calls may be used, and the child's social worker will be provided with the carer's "All about us" booklet to share with the child. Our supervising social workers take the lead in matching and placing children, as they have a close working relationship with their foster carers.

Healthy Lifestyles

Channels & Choices only approves foster families that display the required skills, commitment and emotional capacity to care for one of the children placed with us. Keeping children healthy and active is a key element and we expect all of our carers to encourage children placed with them to take part in play, activities, hobbies and other interests. We believe that this builds positive relationships between all the members of the family, helps build and maintain appropriate peer relationships for the child as well as helping to develop their self-esteem and identity.

Education services & The Sallygate School

We are committed to ensuring that all children placed with us have the opportunity to reach their full educational potential. For some of the children in our fostering service mainstream school will provide the best match and therefore the best outcomes for education. We work in partnership with local mainstream schools and special educational needs departments in order to secure and maintain school placements.

There are also a number of children who are unable to manage a mainstream environment and for these children we can offer a placement in our DfE SEND registered school: The Sallygate School. The school curriculum caters for key stage 2, 3 and 4 pupils (primary and secondary age) and has a high level of staff to child ratios to ensure that each individual child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The school offers a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum blended with the new National Curriculum.

The teaching is based around a sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of each student and is shaped around the ways in which different students learn. This means that we take care to nurture the individual talent and aim to respond to the learning needs of every student. The curriculum is delivered in small learning groups with qualified teachers, who are supported by one or more learning mentors depending on the needs of the group. The timetable places a daily emphasis on Math, English and Science across all Key Stages. In these subjects' students are offered opportunities to work for early accreditation where appropriate. All pupils, including those with an Education, Health and Care plan will have differentiated learning where needed. Where gaps in previous learning are identified, individual support is put in place, to ensure that all students reach their learning potential.

Sallygate school is also supported by our in-house therapy team who offer a wide range of therapy on one to one as well as group basis.

Forest School

Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

The Channels & Choices Forest School is part of Sallygate school offer and is run by a level three accredited Forest School leader and daily groups and activities are incorporated into the Sallygate School curriculum.



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