

# **Five Rivers<sup>®</sup>** **Fostering**

## **Statement of Purpose Fostering Service April 2020**

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# Five Rivers Child Care Ltd – Statement of Purpose

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## Introduction

### Five Rivers Fostering Service

#### Statement Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance relevant to:

- The Children Act 1989.
- The Children Act 2004.
- The Care Standards Act 2000.
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service.
- A statement as to the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service.

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to, and/or made available upon request to:

- Ofsted/Chief Inspector
- Any person working for the purposes of the Fostering Service
- Our foster carers
- Any child (subject to their age and understanding) placed with a foster carer of the Fostering Service, and the parent of any such child
- Local Authorities
- Colleagues from other social care agencies.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Head of Fostering Operations and the Senior Management Team.

## Five Rivers Child Care Ltd – Statement of Purpose

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### Aims & Objectives

**The primary aim of Five Rivers Fostering Service is to provide high quality foster care for the children and young people.**

Five Rivers Fostering Service works in partnership with our service users, carers, local authorities, health and education services and parents in order to help children and young people to feel safe and happy so they can thrive and achieve their true potential and live fulfilling lives.

We are a national organisation, providing locally based support services to our foster carers, children and young people, and their families through a range of child centered practices.

As a Social Enterprise operating in foster care, any surplus income we make is re-invested to provide more foster care support, more training and goes towards recruiting more foster carers to give more stable, loving homes to more children.

### Our objectives:

- A commitment to children centered inclusive practice which supports children and young people, their families, foster carers, local authority and other professional colleagues, delivered with integrity through its Social Enterprise status.
- To recruit, train and support foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds so that we can offer appropriate placements for children and young people.
- To provide 24hour support for our foster carers and children and young people, seven days a week.
- A commitment to the on-going training and development of our foster carers.
- Managers, practitioners and support staff who are all appropriately qualified and registered with their professional regulatory councils, as well as being supported in continuous professional development.
- To carefully match the needs of children and young people with the skills of foster carers.
- To provide foster placements where each child will have stability, security and a warm, safe caring environment in which to positively thrive.
- To ensure that the cultural needs of each child are met.
- To ensure all the children we look after benefit from educational opportunities.
- To ensure a child's physical and emotional health needs are met, and a positive healthy lifestyle is achieved.
- To actively encourage children and young people to express their views and opinion.
- To actively listen and promote participation.
- A focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and high-quality service provision.

## Five Rivers Child Care Ltd – Statement of Purpose

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### Status & Constitution

Five Rivers was established in 1989, and is a private limited company registered under The Companies Act 1985 (Five Rivers Child Care Ltd - company number: 04236028).

We have consistently grown and developed over the years to respond to and provide for the needs of a diverse range of children. In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 & 1989, we produce a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. These are available to the Government Commissions who regulate Independent Fostering Agencies throughout the UK.

We provide therapeutically informed practice. A place where children and young people can recover from experiences of abuse, neglect, family breakdown and trauma. Our Mission is to make a positive and lasting difference through first rate care, ensuring that every vulnerable child and young person can grow, flourish, fulfil their potential and to find the right placement for them, first time.

We are a leading independent, Social Enterprise that works with 'Looked-after Children' who are in need of specialist placements throughout England and Ireland. Being a Social Enterprise means that we care passionately about creating positive social impacts.

The group currently consists of the Fostering Service division, an Education division (made up of schools offering day facilities), a Residential division with eight children's homes in three different regions.

**The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team objectives include:**

- Strategic vision and direction.
- Child centered culture, values and principles.
- Quality assurance and policies & procedures.
- Annual business plan in line with children and service users' needs.
- Developing the service in line with best practice.
- Financial management to ensure best value to local authorities.
- Assimilation of new legislation and regulations into practice.

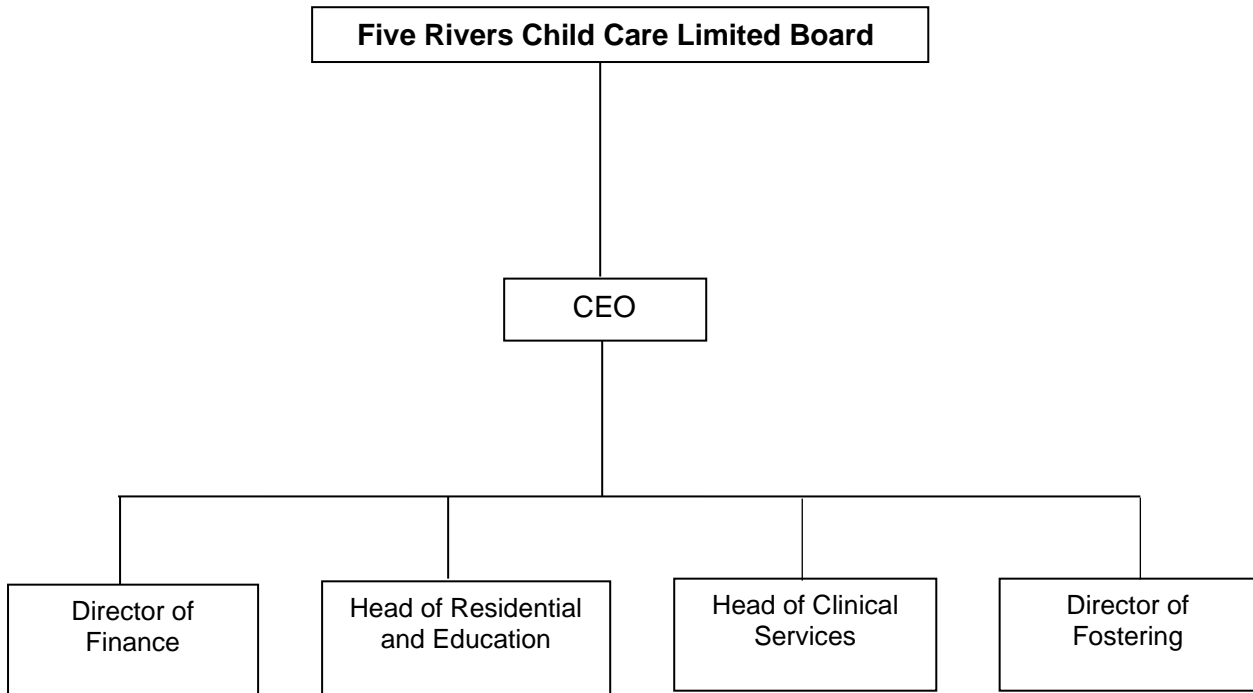
### Management Structure

Each level of the organisation has a forum for discussion and monitoring of relevant issues appertaining to that particular level.

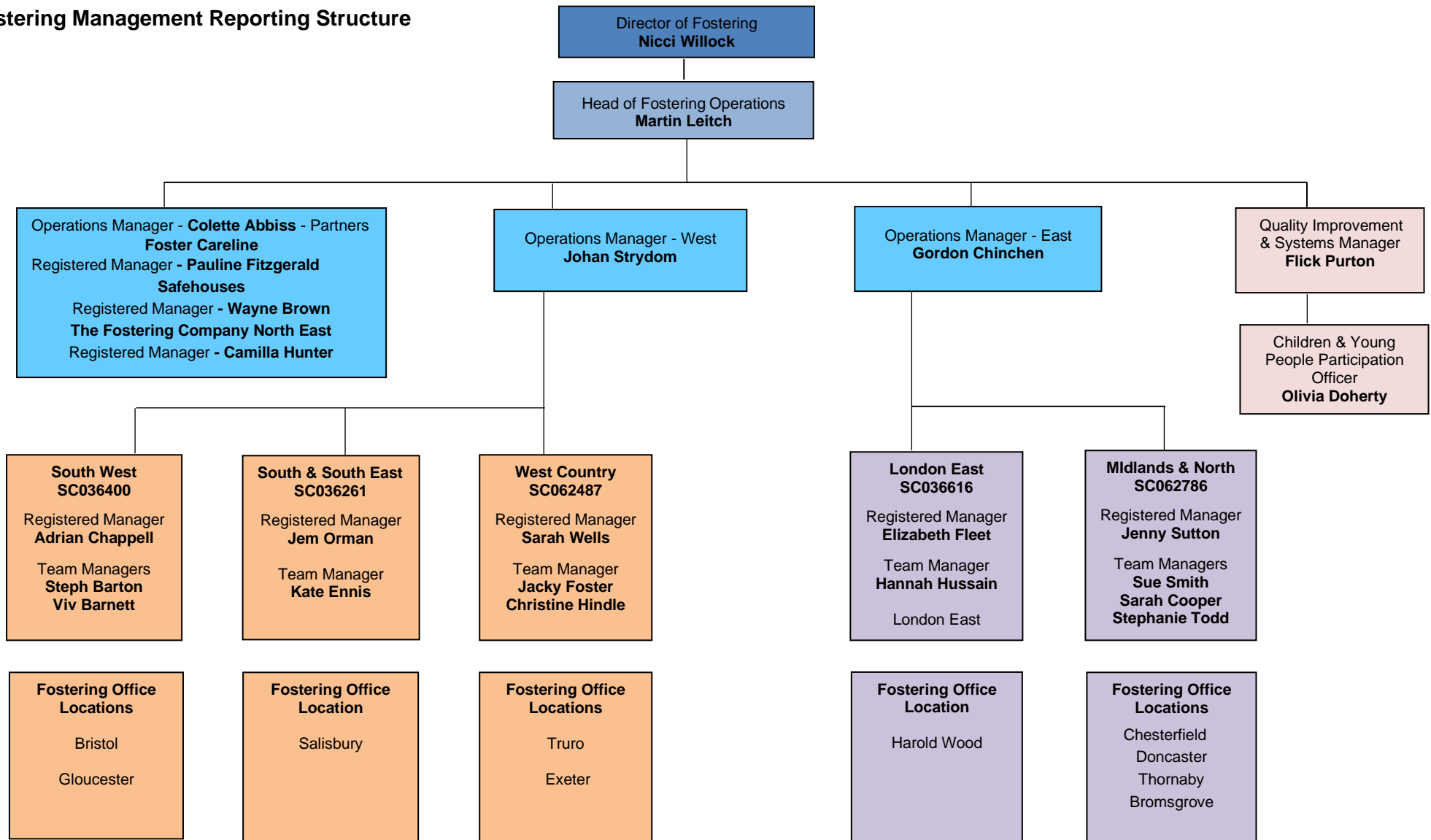
The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team members meet monthly, as do the Fostering Services Operations Management Team and Fostering Service Managers.

In addition, there are Regional Team Meetings, attended by the Head of Fostering, Head of Operations, Operations Managers; Service Manager, Social Workers and Support Team members.

**Senior Management Reporting Structure**



Fostering Management Reporting Structure





## Our Staff

**At Five Rivers Child Care we promote a strong, pragmatic philosophy, shared by all of our professional and experienced staff that each child or young person is an individual in their own right, with their own unique reactions to trauma.**

- The Senior Management Team comprises of the CEO, Finance/Managing Director and Heads of Service who are responsible for the day-to-day management and strategic direction of the organisation. Executive Directors and Heads of Service hold professional qualifications in their respective disciplines of business management, social work, accountancy, human resources, training, education, health & safety management, therapy and IT.
- The Fostering Service Managers are supported by two Operations Managers (East & West) together with a range of business support services provided at Head Office.  
Fostering Panels are responsible for the assessment and approval of foster carers across the organisation. Regional Placement Officers are responsible for the initial processing and recommendations for potential matching of placements in accordance with legislation and internal standards. There is a dedicated foster carer enquiry team which is the first point of contact for all individuals interested in becoming foster carers and registered offices are responsible for the initial visits to our prospective foster carers.
- Five Rivers has a broad range of qualified social workers with post qualifying experience in local authority, especially child protection work and private/voluntary work. All social workers are required to hold a recognised social work qualification and be registered with the appropriate social care body for their location.
- Administration staff are appropriately qualified and undertake a range of specialist roles in data collection and system management.
- Staff receive regular supervision and annual performance reviews and have access to training – ensuring they are aware of new developments, key changes in legislation and best practice.
- In addition to permanent staff, there are a pool of people who work for the agency on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of roles including Panel Members, Form F Assessors, Independent Investigators of Complaints and Sessional Family Support Workers.
- Our education staff have extensive experience: many are qualified teachers who have worked with children presenting challenging behaviour or have special educational needs. All our education staff have knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice for special educational needs, and are supported by specialists and consultants.
- Our therapists either hold or are working towards appropriate qualifications and have experience and registration with a nationally recognised organisation. Our therapists have access to clinical supervision as well as organisational line management.
- All self-employed workers are required to hold appropriate qualifications and have previous experience related to the work they are undertaking. Five Rivers carries out a range of pre-employment checks on all staff including references and telephone follow-up calls and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Checks to ensure the welfare of children and young people is safeguarded.
- All staff who undertake work for us on a permanent, sessional or self-employed basis are covered by appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

## Service Provision

**This document sets out the Standards of Care provided by Five Rivers Fostering Service. Five Rivers is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**

- We comply fully with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and relevant statute law.
- All our foster carers are approved and have signed a Foster Carer Agreement. We review our carers' performance and suitability on an annual basis.
- All prospective foster carers must complete 'Skills to Foster' preparation training as part of their assessment.
- All assessments are undertaken by experienced social work qualified staff with active participation by applicants.
- All foster carers and their homes meet health & safety and risk assessment requirements.
- All foster carers have a training plan designed around their individual developmental needs and have access to regular support groups.
- Children and young people are matched to families who can meet their needs including, as far as possible, their ethnic, religious and cultural needs.
- Commitment to delivering safe child centred care with comprehensive and robust safeguarding systems.
- Placement plans are prepared for each placement which includes essential information, care plans and clarity of delegation of responsibilities to foster carers regarding the placement.
- Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including introductions between foster carers and the child(ren). We help young people settle into new placements by providing them with information about their foster carers.
- We support fostered children to maintain contact with friends and family, where appropriate.
- All our foster carers are committed to meeting the objectives of the child's Care Plan and adhere to the terms of the Placement Plan.
- All our foster carers receive regular support and supervision from their allocated supervising social worker as well as regular phone calls. This is monitored and increased as necessary in line with the needs of the placement.
- 24hour telephone support is always available from a qualified social worker with additional support always available from an experienced and social work qualified manager.
- Support can be made available from specialist consultants (e.g. education / therapeutic and family support workers) on an as needs basis.
- We promote educational participation and attainment for all the children and young people we look after.

## Recruitment & Assessment

1. Once a prospective carer has completed and returned their enquiry form to us, a Service Manager/Social Worker will contact them to discuss their application. If appropriate, following this discussion an 'initial visit' is arranged which is a two-way discussion.
2. If successful with their application, Five Rivers will allocate a qualified social worker to undertake a comprehensive competence based assessment with the prospective carer and their family. They will produce a report, which we refer to as a Form F, which covers all relevant information about all members of the family household and the applicant's skills, knowledge and experience in relation to looking after children and young people.
3. The qualified social worker will visit the home a minimum of 10 – 12 times, working with all members of the family household on their Form F Assessment. The assessment is a joint process and needs full participation from applicants and their family.
4. During Stage One of the assessment, applicants are required to attend a preparation course called 'Skills to Foster'. The training is part of their assessment process and the trainers will produce feedback which will be considered as part of the assessment.
5. The Form F process takes into account the assessment of confidential references provided. The final report is shared with the applicant(s) and presented to our Fostering Panel. Applicants are expected to attend the Panel meeting with their assessing social worker.
6. The Panel makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants to be approved as foster carers with Five Rivers Fostering.
7. Our Agency Decision Maker ensures that when making a decision about whether to approve an applicant as a foster carer that all views and recommendations made by our Fostering Panel are taken into account.
8. Applicants are informed verbally and in writing about the agency decision. All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file and some sections are available to view on request.
9. During Stage One of the assessment process, Five Rivers Fostering Service undertakes a variety of statutory checks, which include:
  - Verification of identity.
  - Disclosure and Barring Service Checks on all adult members of the Households.
  - Local authority checks.
  - Current or previous fostering organisation references, where relevant.
  - Medical reports.
  - Current employment reference.
  - Personal references who will also be visited by a Social Worker.
  - Overseas checks (where appropriate).
  - A Health & Safety inspection will be carried out.
  - Ex-partners with and children of an appropriate age from previous relationships will be contacted.
  - Enquiries to other agencies as necessary.

## Foster Carer Training

**We are committed to providing on-going quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers.**

All our foster carers complete the preparation training course ('Skills to Foster') during their assessment. Following their approval, on-going training and development is provided to:

- Ensure a comprehensive induction training programme for our foster carers who work through the Training Support and Development Standards for Carers, during the first 12 months of being approved.
- Improve foster carers' knowledge and continuously develop their skills in relation to fostering.
- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safer caring and in protecting children from harm.
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development and maintain their individual training profiles.

## Training Courses

All our foster carers are required to complete a minimum amount of training on relevant subjects, including:

- Child Protection, Safer Caring and Safeguarding
- Caring for children who have been abused
- Child Development
- Promoting Contact
- Promoting Identity and Self-esteem
- Valuing Diversity
- Attachment, Separation and Loss
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Education of fostered children and young people
- Caring for children with disabilities
- Preparing children and young people for adulthood
- Legislation and Regulations
- Record Keeping

## Parent and Child Assessment Training

In order to be approved to offer parent and child assessment placements, our foster carers must also undertake a specialist training course, which covers:

- An introduction to parent and child placements
- Tools used to assess the parent and their child in their care
- Keeping the parent and their child safe
- Supporting parents with a learning disability
- How parents form relationships with their children
- Developing recording/report writing skills

## Support for Foster Carers

### Out of Hours & On-call Support

At weekends, bank holidays and at night all our foster carers have access to our on-call service which is staffed by supervising social workers who are supported by a Registered Manager.

Five Rivers also provides an emergency placement service available to local authorities for the urgent placement of children and young people.

### Supervision Visits

Monthly supervision and support meetings are held between supervising social workers and foster carers. These are an opportunity to discuss the needs of the child in placement and ensure the foster carer is able to progress the child's care plan. Any concerns or difficulties are identified and discussed with an action plan identified.

Supervising social workers have primary responsibility for developing the skills of foster carers and identifying training needs with foster carers is a key part of the supervising social worker role.

### Unannounced Visits

All Five Rivers foster carers receive at least one (we aim for two) unannounced visit/s each year in line with National Standards and Regulations.

### Foster Carer Annual Review

All foster carers are reviewed, which is an opportunity to appraise the past year of their fostering career, setting new goals and actions for the year ahead. Training needs are identified and a training plan agreed.

### Family Support Workers

Five Rivers foster carers also have access to family support workers who assist in contact and transport arrangements linked to a child's care plan or can provide organised activities for children and young people.

### Record Keeping

Foster carers maintain diary records in respect of the children and young people they look after. Maintaining records is an important part of the foster carers' role and accurate, factual recordings help us to monitor progress. These recordings, where required, are shared with the local authority and can be used as evidence at Court.

### Foster Carer Handbook

Five Rivers has developed a comprehensive, but easy to understand, Foster Carer Handbook that every approved foster carer has access to in order to aid them with their fostering task. The Handbook contains information on finance, legislation, complaints procedure, access to records, child protection, support, health and safety matters, education information, managing behaviour and various other subjects relevant to foster carers and the task of caring for a young person.

### Carer Support Groups

Regular support groups are held in venues convenient for foster carers. These are groups where information can be shared, any issues can be raised with the agency and most importantly, carers can learn from and support each other.

Other support services available are:

- Our education staff are able to offer support to foster carers in negotiating with schools and promoting children/young people's educational needs\*.
  - Therapists are available to provide expert guidance and support to foster carers of children/young people who are experiencing serious emotional difficulties\*.
  - Membership of Fostering Network aimed at the needs of foster carers, offering free legal advice, legal expenses insurance, advice on tax and personal finance issues and a regular specialist.
- \* The level of support offered may depend on the type of placement provided.

### Foster Carer Forums

Regular meetings with foster carers and Senior Management team 'You say – we did'

## Matching Process

**All Five Rivers placements are carefully 'matched' to ensure that the needs of the children and young people are met by the skills, experience and diversity of our foster carers.**

Many of our foster carers have a wealth of experience or specialise in areas to meet the needs of children who have been abused, have challenging behaviours or for children who have specific medical requirements.

Five Rivers Fostering Service has dedicated Placement Officers who are the first point of contact for enquiries about placement choices and who liaise closely with supervising social workers, foster carers and local authorities to ensure the best possible match for child and foster carer.

All children and young people are different and in this sense all placements are unique.

## Placement Types

Five Rivers Fostering Service aims to provide a range of services and regularly meet with Local Authorities to discuss their needs and identified trends or patterns of required provision. As a Social Enterprise, we endeavour to meet the needs of young people and build our services to adapt to social changes and demographics.

### Short Term, Respite & Emergency Placements

Our skilled and experienced foster carers are able to provide a positive experience for children and young people coming into care at very short notice, for varying lengths of time and for a variety of reasons. We can provide assessments of needs; support back home and preparation into new foster placements or independent living; supported contact with parents and other family members and close working and support during court proceedings. We work flexibly and to ensure that young people understand the purpose and timescales of their placement.

### Long Term/Permanent Placements

Where a long-term plan has been agreed for a child, we can provide foster carers who offer a suitable match which is confirmed by the placing authority's panel. Five Rivers has an excellent record of placement stability and access to a wide range of supports and services.

### Placements for Children with Disabilities

We provide specialist placements for children with profound disabilities and complex health requirements. Our foster carers are highly experienced and many have adapted their homes in order to provide the best possible experience for the children living with them.

## **Parent and Child Placements**

These placements are provided where there is a need for a period of assessment of a parent and child. These are usually time limited and required for court proceedings and further care planning. These placements require a higher level of input and supervision and this is reflected by more frequent support and visits from our supervising social workers. There is usually a required need for the completion of court reports and in some instances, attendances at Court. All carers who provide these placements are specifically approved and trained for this purpose.

## **Complex & Solo Placements**

Five Rivers has foster carers who are recruited, trained and supported to deal with very challenging needs and behaviours. This includes young people assessed as unable to live with other children, those transitioning from residential care into family settings, those with histories of multiple placement breakdowns and attachment difficulties and those who may otherwise be placed in residential care.



## Financial

**Five Rivers foster carers receive a generous weekly fostering allowance, paid directly into the foster carers' bank account by BACS transfer.**

All our foster carers are entitled to a maximum of 14 days holiday pay, per child, per year. The eligibility for this runs from the date of the first placement following approval and is calculated on the basis of 1.2 days per month, per child.

All foster carers are self-employed and as such must ensure they pay their own tax and national insurance. Detailed financial information and guidance is supplied to our foster carers within the Foster Carer Handbook and a detailed annual statement is provided.

Charging information will be confirmed with Local Authorities prior to the agreement of any placement matched and confirmed. Local Authorities can contact Five Rivers for details pertaining to charges at any time. Five Rivers does not include services such as educational / therapeutic support costs within its weekly charges, however, upon any request for additional support, we can facilitate these services, as required, at an additional rate.

## Statistics

**Five Rivers Fostering Service has 408 approved foster families throughout England (October 2019), of which more than 68% have fostered for the agency for two years or more.**

Continuous foster carer recruitment remains a high priority in order for us to meet the needs of our customers in finding suitable fostering placements for a range of children and young people.



## Complaints & Outcomes

The Complaints Policy and Procedure is made widely available to service users and is reviewed annually to check satisfactory operation and to identify any action taken on individual complaints.

Five Rivers Fostering Service places emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level and at an early stage (Stage 1 Complaints).

Throughout England, for the year October 2017 to September 2018, a total of 8 complaints were received.

All complaints have been dealt with in accordance with our policy and procedures. Complaints which moved to Stage 2 were dealt with by the Fostering Operations Manager, who conducts a full investigation and make recommendations for consideration and resolution.

Five Rivers Fostering Service view complaints received as a way to improve the level of service provided. In relation to the complaints received we have been able to reflect and take appropriate action in order to improve practices and procedures, to address the complaints and so resolve the matters identified.

## Equality & Diversity

Five Rivers Fostering Service is committed to encouraging and promoting equality and diversity in all that we do.

We strongly believe that the delivery of our service should not discriminate or result in less favourable treatment of those with whom we work and support on the grounds of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs or marital status. We actively monitor our placement referrals and foster carer recruitment in order to assess the diverse nature of what we have to offer and of what is needed from us.

We are actively seeking ways to engage with our employees, service users and partners to develop, implement and review our policies and procedures, and to improve our performance moving forward and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We measure the impact of our engagement through:

- The Employee Engagement Survey.
- Our Carer Engagement Survey.
- Consultation with and participation of children and young people.
- Consultations with our partner agencies.

## Future Developments

We intend to introduce further developments for monitoring our commitment to equality and diversity through:

- Awareness training for all staff.
- Awareness training for all foster carers.
- Newsletter including topics on issues affecting diversity.
- Updating all Fostering Service policies and procedures to take into consideration best practice.
- Inclusion of an Equality & Diversity Statement within our updated Foster Carer Handbook

## Quality Assurance

### Representation and Complaints Procedure

All children/young people placed with our foster carers are informed of the Representation and Complaints Procedure on commencement of placement by their supervising social worker. They are provided with details of who they can contact within their Children's Guide. All foster carers, staff and placing local authorities are provided with information about our Representation and Complaints Procedure.

### Carer Engagement Surveys

We give consideration to the views, wishes and suggestions of our approved foster carers, through the use of Annual Carer Engagement Surveys to share with us their feedback on the delivery of all aspects of our service. We aim to use this feedback to develop action plans to improve the quality of care and support offered to our foster families and the children and young people placed with them. The results of these surveys are published and available, upon request, to all foster carers and local authorities with children placed and are also made available to Ofsted at the time of Inspections being undertaken

### Complaints and Compliments

A summary of complaint outcomes and their impact upon service design and delivery are collated nationally and reported to the Board. The Fostering Service also maintains a record of all compliments received from service users/commissioners.

## Service Improvement

We promote a culture of continuous improvement, giving careful attention to feedback about services offered by any individuals or organisations with whom we come into contact.

Operational staff are supported by audit and monitoring reports which focus on quality assurance throughout the company.

An internal audit process is completed at regular intervals to ensure practice and regulatory standards are met.

Recommendations from these audits are highlighted, and action plans used to meet requirements and address identified needs that have been identified.

## Accreditation

### Five Rivers Child Care has achieved the following accreditations:

Investors in People – Silver award

ISO9001 2018 & 2019

Investors in Children

## Five Rivers Offices

Carer Recruitment:  
01858 412765  
[fostering@five-rivers.org](mailto:fostering@five-rivers.org)

Placements Team:  
0800 389 8708  
[placementsteam@five-rivers.org](mailto:placementsteam@five-rivers.org)

Staff Recruitment:  
01722 435750  
[recruitment@five-rivers.org](mailto:recruitment@five-rivers.org)

### Midlands & North

Studio Suites H, J & K,  
Market Hall, Market Place,  
Chesterfield, Derbyshire  
S40 1AR  
Tel: 01246 558292

### North East (Part of Midlands & North Registered Service)

First Floor, West Wing,  
Tower House, Thornaby  
Place, Thornaby,  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS17 6SF  
Tel: 01642 612966

### Doncaster (East, South, & West Yorkshire & Lincolnshire)

Unit 1 Heather Court,  
Shaw Wood Way,  
Doncaster  
DN2 5YL  
Tel: 01302 230604

### London & Essex

The Old Brickworks, Church  
Road, Harold Wood,  
Romford, Essex RM3 0JF  
Tel: 01708 393134

### South & South East

Unit 3,  
London Road Office  
Park, London Road,  
Salisbury, Wiltshire  
SP1 3HP  
Tel: 01722 435765

### West Country - Cornwall

Park house,  
Threemilestone Business  
Park, Threemilestone, Truro,  
Cornwall TR4 9LD  
Tel: 01872 264608

### Exeter - Devon (Part of WC Registered Service)

Aldens Business Court,  
7a Chudleigh Road, Exeter,  
Devon EX2 8TS  
Tel: 01392 454989

### South West

Suite 7, Westbury Court,  
Church Road, Westbury-on-  
Trym, Bristol BS9 3EF  
Tel: 0117 9594690

### Gloucester - (Part of SW Registered Service)

Unit 8,  
Steadings Business Centre,  
Maisemore Court,  
Maisemore,  
Gloucester  
GL2 8EY  
Tel: 01452 203159

### Bromsgrove (Part of SW Registered Service)

Basepoint Business Centre,  
Unit 61,  
Bromsgrove Technology  
Park, Isidore Road,  
B60 3ET  
Tel: 01527 834653

## Head Office

47 Bedwin Street  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 3UT  
Tel: 01722 435750  
Fax: 01722 435797

## Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231

## Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Tel: 0800 528 0731