



North East Lincolnshire Council

Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose

2025–2026



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Introduction

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 require that all Fostering Service providers must compile a written statement in relation to the Fostering Service (“the statement of purpose”). This document will be made available upon request for inspection by:

- any person working for the purposes of the Fostering Service.
- any Foster Carer or prospective Foster Carer of the Fostering Service.
- any child/young person placed with a Foster Carer by the Fostering Service.
- the parent of any such child/young person.

The Fostering Service provider must ensure that the Fostering Service is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Reg 5) and the Statement of Purpose will be reviewed, updated and modified whenever necessary, but not less than annually.

Within 28 days of any amendment to the Fostering Statement of Purpose, this must be sent to the Chief Inspector of OFSTED and updated on the local authority Fostering website.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children’s Guide that is provided to all children and young people who are placed in foster care.

National Legislation and Policy Framework

NELINCS, Fostering Service is run in accordance with the principles and practice outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013 (Amendments to the Children Act 1989)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards for Foster Care 2011

- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement, and case Review Regulations 2010
- Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (Amendments) 2015
- Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2024
- 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

Vision for children and carers

Children, young people and families are at the centre of all we do and in the context of our vision 'Our Children Our Future', we want North East Lincolnshire to be a place where our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them.

In North East Lincolnshire, we want all children to be safe from harm, enjoy growing up in loving homes and be part of an inclusive, compassionate, and thriving community where they are listened to, involved in the decisions on their future and respected.

In North East Lincolnshire, relationships unite us and we put children and young people at the heart and of centre of our work. We are ambitious for children and young people in our care, and by working together, by being innovative and collaborative, we want to ensure they have positive experiences and outcomes.

North East Lincolnshire Council is committed to providing Foster Care for children who need to be cared for away from their home. The overall intention of Foster Care is to provide a family home for children and young people who:

- Are not able to live at home with their parents
- Are not able to live with their relatives or friends
- Are not ready to live independently in their own accommodation.

Our commitment

- We will strive to ensure each child is listened to and their wishes considered.
- We will ensure each child is valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.
- We will ensure children receive safe and nurturing care that provides them with the opportunity and confidence to reach their aspirations and goals.
- We will provide Foster Care that protects and promotes the safety and well-being of our children in care.
- We will ensure support, guidance and encouragement is given to our children as they transition into adulthood.
- We will ensure we act as responsible corporate parents and we will work in partnership with all agencies to ensure our offer to children is robust and meaningful, enabling our children, young people and Foster Carers to succeed.

Aims

- The fostering service aims to provide a sufficient range of high-quality foster placements to meet the assessed needs of children looked after by the Council, including children who receive a series of short break care.
- Foster carers will be appropriately assessed, trained, supported and supervised in order to provide high quality care that values diversity and individual identity, promotes healthy development and maximises, children's life chances through the promotion of positive behaviour and educational attainment.

- We will support and value foster families to retain and develop them, and reimburse them for their skills, knowledge, and experience.
- We want our children and young people to live in local homes, in local communities and to be attending local schools and colleges, wherever it is safe for them to do so.
- We want our children and young people to have every opportunity and the support they need to be able to reach their full potential. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- We will give our children stability, understanding, encouragement, positive relationships, and healing from past harm.
- We will support our children to build resilience, ambition and aspirational goals and we will provide practical and emotional support to help our young people successfully transition into adulthood where they will thrive.
- We will support young people to build meaningful and lasting relationships with people they live with and who support them.
- We will ensure the child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.
- Children's Services, together with wider local authority colleagues as corporate parents will have high aspirations for children, families and carers.
- Where a child cannot be cared for within his or her immediate family, strenuous efforts will be made to identify potential carers within the wider family network, who are able and willing to meet the needs and best interests of the child. If continuing care within his/her family is not possible, every effort will be made to identify suitable alternative carers through adoption or other forms of permanence. Efforts to secure the child's future must be timely and avoid delay. Children's Services will ensure that every child has a plan of permanence, at their second Looked after review.

- Children's Services will strive to ensure wherever possible, siblings are placed together. They will be placed in a family placement unless there are assessed reasons why foster care, or an alternative type of placement is the better option. Contact with their birth family will be promoted and supported, except where this may be contrary to the child's best interests.
- If a young person remains in care until adulthood Children's Services will, wherever possible, promote them remaining in their placement from 18 years of age (Staying Put arrangements) and ensure that they are supported when they leave care if they wish, at least until they are 25, to give them a positive start to independent living. This support will include personal assistance with living independently and with accessing and making the most of education and employment opportunities.
- Children, their parents, and other significant adults will be consulted about plans for their care and these plans will be subject to regular independent review. Children and their families will be encouraged to take part in their reviews and can expect that their views will be listened to and will help shape the child's Plan.
- We will ensure that children have access to advocacy services that will assist them in being heard, where this is appropriate. Children looked after by the authority will be matched with an independent visitor when it is assessed that they would benefit from a consistent adult in their life.

Service expectations

In North East Lincolnshire Council, Foster carers can also receive a skills based allowance based on a 3-tiered skills model which considers the foster carer's(s') experience, skills, abilities and learning & development, with:

- a) Level one being considered the foundation level of fostering

- b) Level two being an intermediate level and
- c) Level three being the most advanced level of skills, abilities, and experience in being able to offer individualised care for children with complex, specific needs.

This enables the service to:

- a) Ensure that children are appropriately matched with foster carers who are assessed as being able to meet their needs and
- b) Ensure foster carers are appropriately financially supported for the level of care that they are required to provide dependent on the child's care needs.

All Foster Carers also receive a weekly maintenance allowance, aligned to the National Minimum Allowances (NMA), for the everyday expense of looking after a child and is paid, dependent on the age of the child.

Foster carers and children will have knowledge and understanding of the complaint's procedure. All complaints against foster carers will be investigated in a thorough and timely manner with all parties being informed of the outcome, and the location of documentation being clearly recorded.

All children are entitled to the same level and standard of protection from harm, including those receiving services from statutory or other agencies. For this reason, enquiries and investigations relating to allegations against foster carers must be dealt with under Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures here <https://safernel.co.uk/> The procedures are in line with: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

Foster carers will be supported in meeting educational needs by all partners and specifically by the Looked After Children in Education team, led by the Virtual Head.

Support to carers to meet the health needs of children will be by guidance and training from the Fostering service and by the specialist services of the Health Team for Looked After Children. Emotional and social development

will be supported and encouraged by foster carers who will work to ensure that every child is offered opportunities for the development of talents, interests and hobbies and by the Fostering Service providing resources to encourage access to sporting and leisure activities. Screening for emotional well-being will be carried out and appropriate interventions planned for those most at risk of poor outcomes.

In acknowledging the importance of family and friends of looked after children, the fostering service will promote contact in line with the agreed care plan. Foster carers will encourage and facilitate such contact as is agreed to be in the child's best interest and in the child's placement plan.

Foster homes

When matching a child with a Foster Carer at the beginning of the child's care journey all available information is used to determine which skill band and then which carer within that, is likely to meet the child's needs. It is acknowledged that this can vary once a child is in care and more information becomes available.

Short Term Foster Care would be appropriate in such instances where assessments need to be completed to help decide if it is safe for a child to return home. Often the time scale for this can be set by the court and therefore the time in short term foster care can vary considerably. The Fostering Service supports concurrency in care planning and foster to adopt placements for children who may have an adoption plan as the outcome of assessments. Foster to adopt Foster Carers are also approved as adopters and this type of care arrangement improves care arrangement stability and outcomes for the child as he or she has had the opportunity to develop attachments with the adults and family members who subsequently become their adoptive parents and family.

Long Term Foster Carers are approved to offer a permanent alternative home for a child who is unable to live within their birth family/network and

where adoption is not in the child's best interest. These Foster Carers are formally matched to children.

Kinship Foster Carers refer to the approval of adults known to the child. This can be a family member, family friend or a person connected to the child for example a health or education professional. Their approval is for specific children.

Short Break Care is a service offered to short term carers for planned breaks due to the needs of a child and/or the Fostering family, this is also available to families who have a child with a disability to provide a planned short break.

Support services

Out of Hours:

The out of hours support for Foster Carers is provided by North East Lincolnshire's Emergency Duty Team. This telephone support is available outside of office hours and therefore ensures any foster carer can contact someone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The team can be contacted on 01472 325555 after normal office hours.

Training and Development:

A comprehensive training and development program is in place to support foster carers both pre and post approval and are tailored to the different levels of experience of our carer community. The service recognises the importance of a good, effective training offer to ensure we continue to have carers with the right level of experience in meeting the needs of children in care.

Fostering Network Membership:

All approved fostering households are full members of the Fostering Network membership scheme and become eligible for all the benefits of this membership

Foster Helpline:

This is provided by the Fostering Network for all approved families to give telephone advice and support in cases of need

Independent Support for Carers when allegations or complaints are made

This is provided by a specialist agency which has access to professional staff who can respond within 24 hours of referral.

Specialist Clinical Psychology Advice

All foster carers have access to the services of two clinical psychologists from Young Mind Matters (YMM) for advice, behaviour management strategies and assessment of specific issues as well as training courses run by YMM.

The Virtual School

The team addresses the educational needs of looked after children, monitors progress, and ensures individual support is tailored when needed.

There is a designated Virtual Head Teacher who oversees the progress of all looked after children and works to achieve coordinated support across the whole provision for looked after children.

Looked After Children's Health Team

Specialist assessment, training and advice is available for foster carers and children and young people from this team which includes a Consultant Paediatrician and two nurses. All health care plans are made and monitored by this team.

Psychological Support:

Two Clinical Psychologists based with the YMM service are available for consultation on request. Social workers, foster carers and children can request a referral via the Fostering Team. Advice, assessments, and direct work are provided as well as training courses on attachment and assistance in care planning.

Elected Members

The Corporate Parenting Forum is chaired by the lead Cabinet Member for children. It oversees and scrutinises a range of services for Children in Care and care leavers. This forum receives reports on the Fostering service.

Fostering Network

The Fostering Service has successfully met the criteria to be a Foster Friendly Employer in line with the Fostering Network requirements.

Foster Friendly Businesses

The service has recruited 163 local Business and 37 schools (as of 4/07/25) to join the commitment to being a Foster Friendly organisation.

Fostering in North East Lincolnshire as of 1st July 2025

There were 84 approved Mainstream Foster Carer households with 131 children in their care, alongside 52 Kinship Foster Carer households with 48 children in their care.

Recruiting Foster carers

There has been an increased focus on Fostering Recruitment in this year which has resulted in the service undertaking more Foster Carer assessments.

We have increased our focus, community and partnership engagement across our Local Authority area to raise the profile of Fostering for North East Lincolnshire Council. This drive is evident in our enquiries and prospective carers currently in assessment. The service is on track and forecasting an approval rate of 16 in the first half of 25/26. in comparison to last year where we had 6 approvals in the full year. it is anticipated that next year will also show a continued increase due to the increased focus of Fostering awareness across the Local Authority and community.

Service Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The performance of the service is monitored through its performance indicators and through data calculated within the Council electronic database. Monthly Performance and Quality Assurance meetings take place, chaired by the Deputy Service Director (DSD).

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Staff at all levels are provided with formal professional and case supervision by their line manager and on a monthly basis. All staff are able to obtain informal supervision when required.

Foster Carers reviews are held within 12 months of provisional approval and at least annually thereafter. The Foster carers first annual review is presented to the Fostering Panel for consideration for continued approval. A rolling programme ensures reviews are presented to the Panel on a three-yearly basis. Any reviews where there have been concerns raised such as an allegation or complaint will also be presented at the Fostering Panel. All reviews are presented to the Agency Decision Maker either via the panel process or directly for consideration as to the Foster Carers continued approval status.

The Corporate Parenting Board receives the annual report on the performance of the Fostering Service.

Senior leaders are also sighted on all key aspects of the service on a monthly basis, in addition to an annual report.

The fostering panel provides advice to the service in its quality assurance role. The panel advisor also provides support, advice and has a quality assurance role.

North East Lincolnshire Council's Panel operates to the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 in respect of Fostering matters presented to it. The Panel meets fortnightly to consider each application for approval. The Panel also addresses issues arising through the review process and the operation of the Fostering Service in relation to the needs of children.

We have recruited some new panel members who come with a range of skills and experience, including experience of being foster carers, social workers with roles in both safeguarding and mental health, former practitioners in education and SEND, experience of working with vulnerable children and young people from a variety of settings and a current foster carer from another local authority.

The service holds panel business/training meetings every quarter and is beneficial in ensuring any feedback/ themes from the panel members are both positive and where processes need to be improved, are discussed and subsequently addressed.

The Deputy Service Director for Regulated Services and the Service lead, now meet with the Panel Chair on a quarterly basis. These meetings ensure good transparent working relationships and supports any issues being identified quickly and dealt with promptly.

The service has a Quality Assurance Framework including self-audits, undertaken by fostering staff. Learning from the audit activity is reported into the DSD Assurance meetings by the Service Lead. Any actions are captured and a close the loop monthly meeting takes place. Any learning is captured within the fostering overall development plan. All audits undertaken are also included within the Child Experience and Audit Meetings on a monthly basis (CEAM)

Foster carers are given the opportunity through consultation events and meetings with senior managers to contribute to the development of the service.

Complaints

Children, foster carers, prospective foster carers, and birth family members are provided with written details of North East Lincolnshire's complaints procedure.

It is hoped that the majority of difficulties which arise can be resolved through discussion and negotiation at a very early informal stage. Concerns can be put to the Service Lead at any time, in an email or telephone or letter form and responses will be within 2 working days.

Complaints are dealt with in three stages.

- **Stage One**

A written or telephone complaint can be made either to the Service Lead of the Fostering Service or to the Children's Rights and Representation section of the Children's Services Directorate. Complaints will be acknowledged in writing, within 2 days and a full written response, addressing the detail of the complaint will, be made within 10 days. An extension can be applied for a further 10 working days if needed.

- **Stage Two**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response an investigation will be undertaken by an independent officer. The aim is to complete this investigation within 28 working days, although if the circumstances are complex, the investigation may take longer.

- **Stage Three**

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they are entitled to request a Review Panel to consider their complaint. This panel is made up of an Independent Chair and 2 Elected Members or senior officers from another Directorate. They will make recommendations to the Executive Director of Children's Services).

The Ombudsman

Complainants have the right to contact the Local Government Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied following completion of Stage Three

Ofsted

The inspecting body for all fostering services and fostering agencies is Ofsted. Inspections are carried out under the ILACS framework in monitoring the impact the service is making to children's lives, in addition to ensuring compliance with the standards and regulations for fostering.

Complaints about the service can be made direct to Ofsted at the address below.

Information on making complaints is available in different formats e.g., Braille, Makaton, audio tape and in different languages from the Children's Complaints and Access to Information Manager.

Contact details

Children's Complaints and Access to Information Team

Complaints,
Municipal Offices,
Town Hall Square,
Grimsby,
North East
Lincolnshire,
DN31 1HU

Telephone: (01472) 326426

E-Mail: ChS.customerservices@nelincs.gov.uk

The Inspecting body for the Fostering Services is

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

E-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

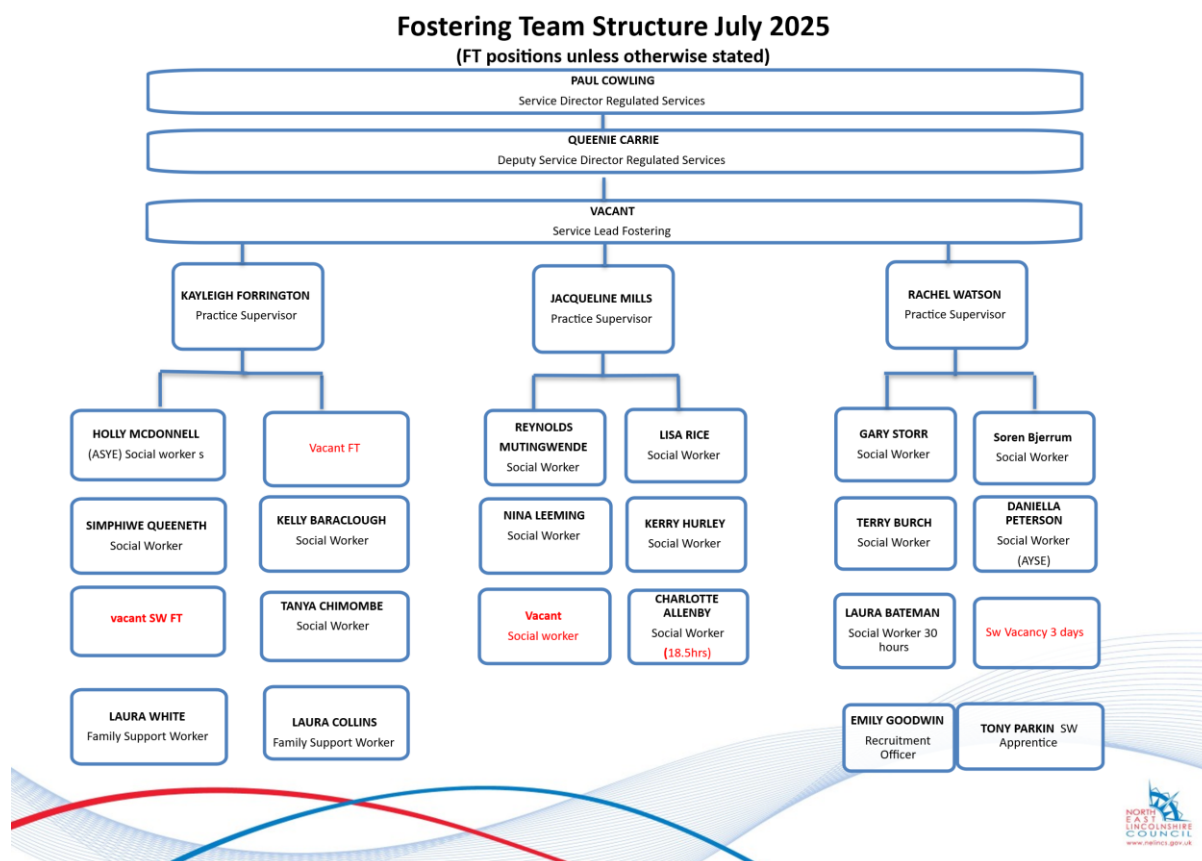
Fostering Service

Fostering and Adoption
New oxford House
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire

DN31 1HB

Tel: 01472 323966**E-mail:** fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk**Service structure**

NO RESTRICTIONS



The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children, whose roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

The people who work in or for the fostering service are fully vetted and selected as being suitable to work with children and young people; they are managed, trained, supervised, and supported so as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and

carers and their range of qualifications and experience is sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the service.

The Deputy Director Regulated Services has strategic responsibility for the Fostering service and is supported by a Service Lead, who oversees the day to day operations and supervisors the Practice Supervisors, who each have responsibility for a team of fostering social workers. The Director of Regulated Services manages the Deputy Director for Regulated Services.

Service Structure

The teams have the following responsibilities:

Two Fostering support and supervision teams

The team provide supervision and support to approved foster carers. Carers will have an allocated fostering social worker who will support and supervise the carers, including undertaking their annual foster carer review. Their role also includes working closely with a child's social worker and other partners as appropriate, whilst ensuring the carer continues to maintain the quality, skills and experience to meet Children's individual needs.

Assessment and support team.

The team assess mainstream and Kinship Foster Carers in addition to having some support responsibilities. The carer will be allocated an assessing social worker who will be responsible for assessing them and supporting them to seek a recommendation from North East Lincolnshire's Fostering Panel.

All Fostering Social Workers in the service hold a relevant Social Work qualification and are registered with Social Work England. The Service has three Practice Supervisors supporting fostering social workers who case holds mainstream or kinship carers, family support officers, and a recruitment officer. Each have a clear focus of work, all members of the Service work across the teams to support the workload as and when needed.

There is a wide range of skills and experience among all staff across the fostering service.

North East Lincolnshire is proud to be a fostering friendly employer and subsequently council staff can be approved as Foster Carers. Any potential conflict in approving any council staff will be considered by the Fostering Service on a case-by-case bases to ensure appropriate matching and approvals at all times.

