

statement of purpose

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mission, status and constitution

1.1 Mission

The mission of Nexus Fostering is to work together with customers and foster carers to provide high-quality fostering placements to enable children and young people to enjoy a positive experience of family life.

Nexus Fostering's Foster Carers' Charter states that *"Services for our foster carers remain central to all those who work for Nexus Fostering and are developed in accordance with our vision - that the full potential of children and young people can be met within high quality foster placements."* **Grace Wyatt, Director**

Nexus Fostering recruits, assesses, supports and supervises foster carers to care for children and young people of all ages.

"Nexus Fostering are the fostering company who help our mums and dads have children put in our homes. They help children who don't have safe homes and put them with people like our parents." **Birth Child**

1.2 Status and Constitution

Nexus Fostering is an independent fostering provider established in March 2002.

The company's registered office is:

4 Jardine House, Harrovia Business Village,
Bessborough Road, Harrow HA1 3EX

Registration number 5577806

The company is registered and inspected by Ofsted, and complies with the standards and expectations identified in the Fostering Services

Regulations 2011 and Amendments 2013, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and Fostering Services and Care Standards Act 2000. Our most recent inspection resulted in a judgement of "Outstanding in all areas".

The Head office is located in Harrow, Middlesex.

There are 6 area teams based in local offices:

1. Wymondham, Norfolk (Anglia team)
2. Edgbaston, Birmingham & Telford (Midlands team)
3. Lolworth, Cambridgeshire (Central team)
4. Harrow, Middlesex (London team)
5. Gloucester, Gloucestershire (South West team)
6. Upminster, Essex (South East team)



The area offices provide consistent local support to foster carers and children and young people, and support the development of co-operative, professional and responsive relationships with placing Local Authorities. Area sub-offices develop according to clusters of needs: a sub-office in Telford supplements the services of the area team in Birmingham, and locally-based staff support growth and development of the East Midlands region.

The Agency takes referrals from Local Authorities throughout the Midlands, East of England, Thames Valley, the London Boroughs and the Cotswolds area. It has been approved as a fostering service provider to both individual authorities and Consortiums across these regions.



aims, objectives and principles

2.1 Aims

Nexus Fostering aims:

- To provide fostering placements for 'looked after' children and young people, that offer a stable and consistent experience of family life, to enhance and maximise their life opportunities.
- To uphold the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people as being of prime importance.
- To deliver services that impact upon the lives of children and young people and result in positive outcomes.
- To encourage and develop the participation of children and young people in planning for their own lives and in service development and review of the agency's systems.
- To recruit and retain foster carers, from a range of backgrounds and experience, with a broad spectrum of identity and with the potential to offer a high standard of foster care to children and young people.
- To prepare, support and develop foster carers to enable them to meet the expectations of high quality foster care.
- To recruit, retain and develop appropriately qualified and experienced staff and provide opportunities for training and development.
- To provide a comprehensive package of supervision and support to foster carers, children and young people and the placement as a whole, to enable and assist meeting identified needs.
- To work in a professional manner with foster carers and ensure a high ratio of staff to carers.
- To provide inclusive services and opportunity of experiences to children and young people.
- To include a broad spectrum of individuals throughout its service provision.
- To engage and communicate with its children and young people, its carers and the Local Authorities it serves, and to provide, review and develop services, skills and resources that are responsive to their requirements.
- To work in close partnership with Local Authorities to identify and promote the best interests of children and young people.
- To assist Local Authorities with planning and service provision.
- To respond to all complaints and allegations, make full investigation and take appropriate action.
- To deliver services compliant with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and exceed, the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.
- To review and maintain policies and procedures that comply with legislative and statutory requirements and expectations, and reflect developments in professional practice and knowledge.
- To create an environment where all individuals feel safe, respected and listened to regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes and where individual differences are recognised and celebrated.
- To manage the fostering agency on a sound financial basis and maintain continuity for children and young people and their carers.



2.2 Objectives

- To provide care that impacts positively upon children and young people's lives.
- To deliver positive outcomes for children and young people so that:
 - Their wishes, feelings and views are heard, respected and acted upon.
 - They are kept safe and receive guidance in keeping safe.
 - They experience a sense of family membership and enjoy family life
 - Their need for development in all aspects (social, emotional, psychological and physical) is met, their identity (age, ability, ethnicity, faith, gender and sexuality, culture) is recognised and its expression supported.
 - They have stability in placement
 - They are helped to be healthy and guided in healthy lifestyles
 - They are supported to progress in their learning and personal achievement.
 - They are helped to benefit from contact with family and friends
 - They receive preparation for independence.

2.3 Principles

- The needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount.
- The agency is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all carers, staff and those from whom it commissions a service to share this commitment.
- Provision of safe and responsive care entails a commitment to training and development by all individuals involved.
- All individuals working for Nexus Fostering, its carers, children and young people, and those individuals in contact with the agency as customer and enquirer, deserve respectful and considerate service and for their views to be heard and managed appropriately.
- Foster carers and staff have a right to regular supervision, training, professional development and support.
- Carers and individuals who work for the agency adhere to policies and procedures.
- The agency is managed in a child-focussed, ethical and efficient manner, utilising business systems, financial support and external support services as needed.
- The agency will provide a 'value for money' service for Local Authorities.



standards of care and service quality

3.1 Placement of Children and Young People

- Children and young people are placed with foster carers that match their racial, cultural, religious and linguistic background wherever possible.
- The views of the child or young person will be sought and considered wherever possible in respect of their placement and in decisions about their lives.
- Their psychological, emotional, identity, educational and health care needs are considered, met, monitored and promoted.
- The safeguarding and protection of children and young people are of primary concern.

3.2 Assessment, Approval and Panel

Assessment processes take account of the Fostering Service Regulations and Guidance; they are transparent and thorough. The assessment is managed in a timely way, according to the situation. Robust, analytical reports are completed according to the Form F outline.

Recommendations to approve and advisory terms reflect the suitability of the household to foster (approval) and the best match for the household (matching recommendation.) The role of two local approval Panels, drawn from the Central List of members, is to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people by their consideration of assessments and reviews. They provide a quality assurance function independent of the agency.

The Panels make recommendations in relation to new applications, annual reviews, post allegation/complaint reviews, terminations of approvals. They may also consider policy and development issues.

Panels meet in London and Birmingham. Their memberships have a balance of gender, ethnicity, life experience and qualifications in order to consider all matters from wide perspectives. Panels have access to legal and medical advice as required.

Two Independent Chairs carry significant experience of working with children and young people in the statutory sector and independent capacities.

Central List members include:

- foster carers and adopters
- care-experienced young people
- education advisors
- social workers with extensive experience in work with young people approaching independence and leaving care, young offenders and family placement
- therapists



3.3 The Foster Carers' Charter

The agency endorsed the expectations and spirit of the Foster Carers' Charter, initiated by Government in 2011. Nexus Fostering has set out its own Charter, lodged with the Department for Education.

The agency and its carers make clear their expectations of each other and make specific commitments to work together as a team to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

Carers can expect:

1. Practice that centres upon the children and young people in their care.
2. Appreciation of the importance of their relationship with the child or young person
3. Working in partnership
4. Information sharing and communication
5. Clear decision-making
6. Support, training, advice and development
7. Fair and respectful treatment
8. Consultation and the opportunity to influence agency practice

The agency can expect:

1. Practice that centres upon the children and young people
2. Working in partnership
3. Information sharing and communication
4. Responsible use of delegated authority
5. Use of support, training and advice
6. Fair and respectful relationships with individuals involved in the care plan

3.4 Foster Care Agreements

Foster Care Agreements set out the mutual expectations and understanding of the agency and its carers.

Foster carers are given access to an online Foster Carers' Handbook containing details of, but not limited to:

- Supervision and support, development and training.
- Carer reviews
- Provision of care and working to the care plan
- Allegations, and Complaints and Representations procedures
- Financial support and expectations
- Recording and Confidentiality expectations
- Safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Positive behaviour management and use of restraint
- Delegated authority

3.5 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The Registered Manager oversees a comprehensive monitoring system in accordance with regulatory requirements. Safeguarding matters are a key priority, and the registered manager has lead responsibility. Patterns of concern are identified within reporting structures of the agency and action taken.

The Directors consider regular reports of business, recruitment and service delivery activity, and factual data is further informed by personal knowledge of the agency's staff, carers and children and young people.

The outcomes and progress for children and young people are monitored and understood by narrative and qualitative measures, and the means of doing so are regularly under review.

Annual audits of practice, with a targeted approach to particular areas of that practice, are conducted. The findings and implications for learning and development are shared across the agency.

Practice changes and develops as a result of:

- Research
- Legislation
- Customer, carer or child and young person feedback
- Experience of application of a policy or procedure

3.6 Complaints Management

The agency has a clearly defined 'Complaints and Representation' and 'Whistleblowing' process that is accessible to children and young people and their families, foster carers, staff, Central List members, independent assessors, Local Authorities and other independent persons commissioned to contribute to our service. Complaints are treated respectfully, efficiently and promptly and resolution is sought as early in the process as possible, without un-necessary escalation. The agency facilitates the intervention of independent persons as necessary. The agency monitors complaints and aims to learn from any situation whether a complaint is upheld or unfounded.

3.7 Safeguarding

The agency sets the safeguarding of all children and young people placed in its care, and that of the children of its foster carers, at the heart of its practice. All members of the agency and everyone commissioned by it to deliver a service, is expected to adhere to the highest safeguarding practice. The agency maintains and regularly up-dates 'Safeguarding', 'Runaway, Absent and Missing' and 'Exploitation' policies and practice and incorporates good practice and research evidence into its service delivery. Awareness of up-dated safeguarding knowledge is expected of all staff and carers.

Allegations concerning the practice of approved carers is managed within 'Allegation' procedures and the agency works in close co-operation with Local Authorities investigating allegations of harm.

3.8 Leading Improvements for Looked after Children (LILAC)

In Spring 2011, Nexus Fostering was inspected by care-experienced young people, using standards devised by their peers to reflect issues important to them.

The agency met the standards for:

- Shared Values
- Style of Leadership
- Care planning and Review
- Complaints and Advocacy

Nexus Fostering was proud to receive the LILAC award and continues its relationship with LILAC in 2015.

3.9 Participation

Children and Young People's Forums began in one local team in 2010, and by late 2013 there were agency-wide Participation Groups

In 2015 a cross-agency Youth Council is being developed. Support and active promotion of the participation of children and young people in the development of the agency is an additional 'quality assurance' measure for our practice.



services for children and young people

4.1 Best Interests

Children and young people in placement with Nexus Fostering are seen regularly by an allocated Nexus Fostering supervising Social Worker. Due consideration is given to the role and involvement of the Local Authority Social Worker and there is clarity regarding the responsibility of each Social Worker.

Foster carer supervision addresses the care provided to children and young people in support of:

- Their physical and emotional development
- Achievement and engagement in education, leisure and social activity
- Varied life experience and use of opportunity
- Family membership and inclusion
- Preparation for successful, independent adult life

The supervising Social Worker ensures the best interests of children and young people are safeguarded and promoted and identifies further appropriate services to promote their physical, mental and emotional welfare. Delegated authority is actively promoted.

Nexus Fostering seeks to promote a child or young person's participation in the decision-making that affects their lives. They are kept informed. Their views are ascertained and recorded

4.2 Services

Services available for children and young people include:

1. Supervised contact with families
2. Access to national organisations for 'looked after' children and young people
3. Support to access full health and education services
4. Bespoke written materials including:
 - Leaving Care Guides
 - Looked-after Children Review documents
 - Guides for both older and younger children
 - Record Book for charting health ,education, and finance matters
 - Bi-monthly newsletters
5. Life story and permanency preparation
6. Individual and group work
7. Holiday activities and outings
8. Leaving care advice, information and support
9. Kidzone section on the Nexus Fostering website and a designated email address for contact with the agency to encourage participation and consultation.
10. Access to therapeutic assessment and input including a 'buddying' scheme.
11. Educational support and assistance, through support in school, and tutorials for excluded pupils.
12. Joining Participation Groups to develop services from Nexus Fostering



4.3 Services

The agency:

- Sets aspirations and aims high for children and young people, and celebrate every step towards them.
- Maximises opportunity for children and young people to meet their potential to achieve.
- Shares understanding of the impact of past experience, learnt behaviour, coping strategies and the mental health of children and young people, on their conduct within school and their receptiveness to learning.
- Advocates for appropriate education provision and support
- Prepares staff and carers to engage with schools in planning to meet the additional special educational needs of children and young people in their care.
- Supports implementation of Education, Health and Care plans

Looked after children and young people say:

“I feel safe at Nexus” “Nexus is a fun place where you can talk to ANYONE”



services for our foster carers

5.1 Training and Professional Development

Training for prospective and approved foster carers takes place throughout the year and is delivered locally. All prospective foster carers attend the 'Skills to Foster' preparation course.

A range of additional post-approval training courses is provided.

The Skills to Foster course and core training provides the basis for carers to achieve and to evidence the Training, Support and Development Standards.

Carers are expected to make a commitment to their personal professional development. Objectives for new learning and skills acquisition and development are set at each review as a minimum. Carers are monitored through regular formal supervision.

Carer supervision provides a one-to-one opportunity to reflect on training attended and identify additional sources of information and advice. Approaches to individual children and young people develop through application of that learning, under guidance of the agency.

Foster carers are supported to complete further vocational training appropriate to their role.

5.2 Support

Nexus Fostering offers a comprehensive package of support to carers, which has a positive impact on placement stability and improves the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

The support provided includes:

- A designated supervising Social Worker, in regular and flexible contact.
- Access to 24 hour duty support, every day of the year
- Therapeutic advice and support for carers
- Educational advice and support for carers
- An on-line Foster Carers' Handbook
- A comprehensive pre and post-approval training programme for foster carers
- Bi-monthly support meetings and newsletters
- Activities for children and young people, including carers' own children
- Festival and birthday allowances
- A fortnight's paid respite allowance per year
- Outreach workers to support children and young people in placement
- Pension option
- Tax, pension and financial advice
- Paid membership of FosterTalk, including access to their legal advice line
- A website providing information and advice for foster carers
- A resource library for foster carers
- Events and Activities for carers and their households throughout the year



5.4 Review

All approved foster carers are reviewed annually. All parties to a placement are consulted. The review process identifies strengths and areas for further development. It informs the 'best match' for the carer household.

In addition to the annual review, reviews are held when there has been:

- a complaint or allegation
- a significant change in circumstance

or Where:

- de-registration is being considered
- another matter of concern needs to be addressed in a formal way



services for local authorities

6.1 Placements

Nexus Fostering offers a range of placement opportunities including:

- Long term foster placement
- Siblings who need to stay together
- Emergency placements – specific in time definition
- Parent and Child placements
- Children & young people with disabilities
- Care+ Placements
- Short-term, task-centred placements
- Staying-Put and post-18
- Responsive, flexible placements, where the objective changes over time. For example, task-centred placements that become planned long-term arrangements
- Asylum-seeking children and young people
- Special Guardianship and/or Adoption support

6.2 Services

Nexus Fostering maintains a positive commitment to working to the care plan and provides a range of services to support the corporate parenting of the Local Authority.

These include:

- Attendance at meetings in relation to the child or young person
- Review reports
- Services to support the child or young person
- Liaison and notification of safeguarding concerns
- Sensitive management of confidential placements
- Open communication in relation to carer issues
- A responsive recruitment strategy to meet individual developing needs of Local Authorities



6.3 Parent and Child Placement

1. A Parenting Support Placement provides care, support and guidance to a parent and their child with a minimal level of supervision and intervention.
2. A Parenting Assessment Placement provides observation and analysis of the parenting care given, of the interaction between a parent and their child and in respect of the guidance necessary and skills' acquisition of the parent. A full parenting report is provided which contributes to the Local Authority decision making and planning.

6.4 Care+ Placement

Nexus Care+ provides specialist wraparound placements for children and young people with complex attachment problems and challenging behaviours.

Launched in 2014, Nexus Care+ was founded on principles that we know work and that produce positive outcomes for children and young people.

In addition to the comprehensive services provided to all Nexus Fostering placements, enhanced services are integrated within a package of all-round care, designed to support these particularly complicated and demanding foster placements.

Nexus Care+ adopts a therapeutic fostering approach shared by the network of staff and foster carers around the child or young person. The therapeutic input develops and supports the core relationship between the carers and the individual child or young person according to the needs and dynamics of each placement.

The team around the child or young person is provided with:

- Up-to-date, evidence-based innovative and relevant training by a consultant Psychotherapist (MBACP accredited)
- Monthly clinical supervision which is both informative and challenging
- Direct case consultation with the Psychotherapist

The therapeutic input develops and supports the core relationship between the carers and the individual child or young person according to the needs and dynamics of each placement.

Enhanced individual supervision to carers provides guidance and advice regarding the understanding of and response to behaviours. Carers learn to respond therapeutically, becoming effective and resilient in their work with challenging behaviour and emotional trauma. This provides consistency, safety and security so the child or young person can settle, grow and thrive.

Enhanced support will be available to the placement through the supervising Social Worker and outreach; engagement in education will be promoted through direct advice to teaching staff. The placing authority receives analytical, informed reports of the placement.



management structure and staffing

7.1 Structure

The Board consists of the Nexus Fostering Director and a non-executive Director.

The Director and Responsible Individual has three direct reports:

- ~ The Deputy Director and Registered Manager
- ~ Two Assistant Directors

The Deputy Director and Registered Manager is reported to by:

- ~ The Quality Assurance Manager
- ~ A group of Regional/Area Team Managers

The first Assistant Director is reported to by:

- ~ A group of Area managers and carries area team management responsibilities.

The second Assistant Director is reported to by:

- ~ The Reviews and Administration Officer
- ~ Senior Placements Officer
- ~ The Recruitment and Placements team

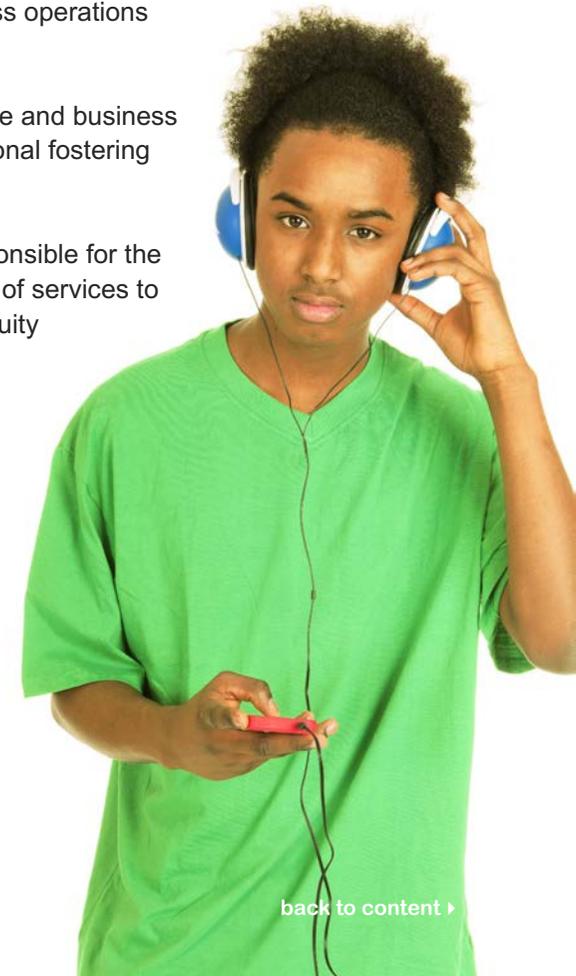
7.2 Qualifications, Experience and Responsibilities of Staff

The Director, Deputy Director and one Assistant Director are qualified Social Workers with significant experience in Children and Family work and Family Placement. In addition, they have relevant management qualifications. The second Assistant Director has an extensive and established background in administrative and business operations systems, and staff management.

The Director has ultimate responsibility for the practice and business functions of the agency. The Director liaises with national fostering organisations and government bodies.

The Deputy Director and Assistant Directors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency; the development of services to children and young people; business planning, continuity and development.

The Quality Assurance Manager is a qualified Social Worker with over 20 years practice and considerable experience in Family Placement and the independent fostering sector. The manager is responsible for maintaining policy and procedures, compliant with regulations and contributes to the development of new initiatives, policy and practice within Nexus Fostering. The role entails developing and conducting audits of the agency's systems and service quality.



All Area Managers are qualified social workers with a minimum of 10 years' post qualification experience in Children and Family work and Family Placement. Area Managers lead teams of supervising Social Workers and administrators. They may delegate specific tasks to deputy managers or to senior workers. They oversee local foster carer recruitment initiatives in partnership with Head Office.

Senior Social Workers are required to have a minimum of 3 years relevant post qualification experience, and Deputy Managers are required to have a minimum of 5 years post qualification experience.

All Social Workers are registered with the Health Professions Council
The agency maintains an additional pool of independent assessors and outreach staff.

Nexus Fostering commissions trainers, therapists, educationalists and other support staff on an independent, contracted basis to achieve the input of specialist knowledge and experience. The agency ensures all such staff are appropriately qualified and supervised.

7.3 Recruiting Safely

Nexus Fostering is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all carers, staff and those from whom it commissions a service to share this commitment.

All staff and independent individuals providing a service to the agency that includes contact with children and young people or access to confidential or sensitive information are appropriately checked, and required to agree to specific undertakings in respect of their conduct and practice.



contact details

Head Office and London Regional Office

4 Jardine House, Harrovia Business Village,
Bessborough Road, Harrow HA1 3EX

Tel: 020 8864 6040 (Main office)

Tel: 020 8864 9009 (London Team)

Anglia Regional Office

Suite 1, The Old Dairy, Elm Farm Business Park,
Norwich Common, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 OSW

Tel: 01603 811 118

Midlands Regional Office

46 Calthorpe Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TH

Tel: 0121 427 2500

Midlands Satellite Office

Ramada Hotel & Conference Centre, Forgegate, Telford TF3 4NA

Tel: 01952 916 002

Central Regional Office

3 Hazlewell Court, Bar Road, Lolworth, Cambridge CB23 8DS

Tel: 01223 903 503

South West Regional Office

Unit A5, Elmbridge Court, Cheltenham Road East,
Gloucester GL3 1JZ

Tel: 01452 491 980

South East Regional Office

Suite 2, Essex House, Station Road, Upminster, RM14 2SJ

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