

statement of purpose

who we are and what we want to do, an explanation for children and young people

A 'Statement of Purpose' is written by fostering agencies to explain what they're all about. They are written for local authorities, parents, foster carers and staff, and this one is written for children and young people. It has the same information but more to the point!

"Children and young people are why we're here" - Grace Wyatt, Director

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1. who are we? what is nexus fostering all about?

Nexus Fostering is an independent fostering agency, run by social workers, for children and young people who need to live in another family while they cannot be at home in theirs. They should be safe, well-cared for, liked and respected, for as long as they need to be there. We want children and young people to enjoy a positive experience of family life during their time with us.

Looked after children and young people say:

"I feel safe at Nexus"

"Nexus is a fun place where you can talk to ANYONE"

"I think Nexus Fostering is really good and everyone I've met have literally been the nicest people I've ever met"

"This has been the best placement for me since like forever, I cannot imagine being with anybody else"

"Nexus Fostering are good people"

"They are very helpful and generous"

"I'm doing great and I'm really happy"

"I think Nexus Fostering are very helpful and generous"

"I think you are a really good agency because you bring support for me and my sister"

We find foster carers who want to be good at what they do and enjoy being with children and young people, through the good times and the bad.

Nexus Fostering aren't part of any local authority. Local authorities come to us when they don't have the right foster carer for a child or young person, we work with the local authority social workers linked to you. Local authority social workers are in charge of the planning, but Nexus Fostering social workers are in charge of the foster family part.

Our priority is you and the life you live with us, rather than the bigger picture of everything that's been going on for you before. We need to understand the past so we understand you, but we focus on the future.

Who do we look after?

All sorts of children and young people live with Nexus Fostering foster carers. Children and young people who:

- need time out from their family but will go home
- may not go home to where they come from, but will go to other members of their family or a new family completely, or may stay where they are for good
- need to be kept safe
- need support and help from quite a few people, all working together
- have special needs and disabilities

and:

- parents learning the best way to look after their child
- young people from other countries who have been separated from their families because of wars and fighting

Whatever the reason a child or young person comes to Nexus Fostering, everyone is important and we work hard for them.

Where are we?

Our head office is in Harrow, London. We also have offices in:

- Wymondham & Norfolk (Anglia teams)
- Birmingham & Telford (Midlands teams)
- Cambridgeshire (Central team)
- Gloucestershire (South West team)
- Hornchurch, (South East team)
- Luton



Our children and young people are linked to one of these teams, depending on where they live. Our social workers are based there and enjoy getting to know the carers and children and young people through visits, days out and activities.

What we all have in common

Everyone in Nexus Fostering, no matter who they are, has 3 things in common.

1. they believe that the needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are always the most important things
2. they are committed to keeping children and young people safe from harm
3. they will always do their best, making sure they know how to do their job well, get help when they need it, and work as part of a team to get good results for each child or young person

2. what do we want to do?



Nexus Fostering want to:

- find fostering placements for children and young people who need them
- offer a settled place to live for a while, where a child or young person has time to think and talk to someone about their wishes and feelings
- keep children and young people safe and make sure that are given the best chances to do well and achieve what they want
- make sure we have the best carers to match the children and young people in culture and heritage and faith, in their life experience, interests and where they live
- give our carers the best advice to help them care for and understand children and young people
- find staff who enjoy working with children and young people and their foster carers and take the time to listen and understand, and have the knowledge that helps
- find different ways for children and young people of all ages, interests, personalities and abilities to take part in the decisions that affect their lives
- see children and young people alone and in groups, to hear what they have to say about what we and their carers are doing for them, and do something about it where we can
- take children and young people's complaints seriously and act on them
- understand the laws about being in care and fostering, and make sure we and everyone else does what we are supposed to do
- keep children and young people, the people important to them, and the local authority social workers, up-to-date with what's going on (not everybody needs to know everything; everyone deserves some privacy)
- be an agency where everyone feels safe, respected and listened to no matter who they are and where individual differences are important

We will know we are getting it right when

Children and young people can see the results, and:

- their wishes, feelings and views are heard, respected and acted upon
- they are kept safe and helped to keep themselves safe
- they experience a sense of belonging where they live, and enjoy family life
- they grow and develop in every way, know who they are and who they want to be, and feel able express themselves freely
- their placement lasts for as long as they need it to and they don't have to move unless it's right for them
- they are helped to be healthy
- they are supported to make progress in their learning at school or college, in training or work, in sport or their interests
- they have good contact with family and friends
- they are helped towards being an adult

3. how do we do it?



Nexus Fostering will:

- find and train the best families we can to be foster carers for us, making sure they like children and young people and spend time with them
- make sure our carers make time to listen, and want to understand how they see their world
- match children and young people to the right family for them, based on everything we know at the beginning and keep checking with everyone that it is still the right place once we know a bit more
- do something about things that might go wrong
- help good things to happen and be proud when they do

Our foster carers will:

- look after children and young people well
- work with the Nexus Fostering social workers and the local authority social workers to make the Care Plan happen
- listen to children and young people and speak up for them
- make decisions with a child or young person's best interests in mind
- help children and young people live ordinary lives as much they can

Working with children and young people

Our social workers see children and young people both with their foster family and on their own. We work out together what help, support, activities and talents we need to pay attention to and how to do it. We pay attention to what matters: family, health and education, how they feel and what they like to do, what's happening in life now and what the future might be.

Exactly how we do that is written about in the Children's and Young People's Guides we give at the beginning of a placement with Nexus Fostering.

Throughout a child or young person's time with us, we will talk to them and listen, help them to feel a part of their foster family and the agency, and support them in every way we can. We make an effort to include children and young people in contributing to the planning for their future.

Support for our fostering families

We make sure our carers are ready to care for children and young people and understand what they're doing. We remember what other children and young people have told us about what makes a good carer and we look for that as well as what we think is important. We visit often and talk about what's going well, what isn't, and how to change things for the better.

It's not all hard work. Fostering families and fostered children and young people are invited to activity days, picnics, pantomimes and celebrations during the year, getting together with people they might have things in common with. You can be a part of this side of Nexus Fostering as much or as little as you like.

4. keeping up standards



Our promises and 'charters'

A charter is a set of promises made between 2 groups of people, which they are expected to keep. Keeping to a charter is the 'right thing to do' rather than it being a law.

We have a charter with our foster carers and we have a charter with our children and young people. Every child and young person is given a copy when they come to Nexus Fostering.

One of the promises we have made is to listen seriously to what children and young people have to say. We want to:

- get you more involved in how Nexus Fostering is run
- give you a voice in what goes on
- listen and learn



Listening to views and wishes

It is important to involve children and young people in deciding some of the ways Nexus Fostering works, "so the carers understand about children from us and not from social workers" (Nexus Fostering young person).

Participation groups in every office bring children and young people together to discuss what Nexus Fostering needs to do to improve the experience of children and young people receiving its services. The group meets 3 times a year. We learn about what really happens as a result of what we do or say. If Nexus Fostering are thinking about a new idea, we often 'test it out' with a group before taking it further. Participation groups think of new ideas, too.

A member from each local Participation group sits on the Youth Council, which meets with the Directors of Nexus Fostering to swap ideas and views both ways. A Youth Council member said that both sorts of meetings help young people "to communicate with everyone".

Any child or young person can make their views heard. They don't have to be part of a regular group. They just need to tell someone in Nexus Fostering what they think and it will get through to people who need to hear.

About living with our foster families

We review foster carers just like local authorities hold reviews for children and young people. Every year, reviews look at what has happened in the last year and what will happen in the next. Quite a few people are asked to say what they think from their point of view and we include fostered children and young people in the people we ask.

Complaints

If a child or young person is unhappy about something that Nexus Fostering or their staff or carers do or don't do, they can complain and we will take it seriously. We will treat their complaint in exactly the same way as we do for adults.

How we do that is explained in the Children's and Young People's Guides.

What other people tell us

We don't only decide for ourselves whether we are doing a good job or not. We're checked and judged by Ofsted, ('the government'), and we ask to be checked by LILAC, an organisation run by young people who have been in care. Both of these groups thought we were doing an excellent job.

Ofsted listens to complaints about us and children and young people can contact them direct. Their number is in the Children and Young People's Guide given at the start.

5. who's in charge and who might i meet?



At the top of the agency, we have The Agency Director, Grace Wyatt.

Four other Directors help her, and are in charge when she's away. They are 'second in command'. They also each have a particular job of their own to do:

- Paul's main job is to make sure children and young people across the agency are safe, and he gets told if there is a problem
- Steve is in charge of training our foster carers and making sure they know what they need to know
- Sandra is in charge of making sure children and young people are understood by their foster families and helped to do well
- Kelly is in charge of all the offices and equipment, all the paperwork and filing, and the money

These Directors are linked to teams. Teams each have their own manager and they get to know children and young people who are living with their group of foster carers and visited by their social workers. Usually only the social worker for the fostering family and their manager visit children and young people at home.

There are lots of other people too, and children and young people could meet any of us at an activity or in the office, but far less often than the social workers and the team managers. We understand that meeting lots of different people isn't always a good thing.

The main thing to remember is that everyone works together for the benefit of the children and young people in Nexus Fostering's care.

6. last words

Everyone who works for Nexus Fostering has to be good at whatever they do and enjoy doing it. We have to take it seriously but have a good sense of humour and like working as a team - with each other, with carers and with children and young people.

We hope the children and young people placed with us will find it that way.

7. where to contact us

The Agency Director, Grace Wyatt
020 8864 6040

The London Team
020 8864 9009

The Anglia (Wymondham) Team
01603 811118

The South Midlands (Birmingham) Team
0121 427 2500

South East (Hornchurch) Team
01708 395 708

The Central (Cambridge) Team
01223 903 503

The Luton Team
01462 431774

The Anglia (Norwich) Team
01603 762 596

The North Midlands (Telford) Team
01952 916 002

The South West (Gloucester) Team
01452 491 980

For anybody:

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