

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**FOSTERING  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

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**AUTHORISING OFFICER:**

**Debbie Haith**

**Assistant Director of Children's  
Social Care**

**AUTHORISING OFFICER SIGNATURE:**

**AUTHOR OF PUBLICATION:**

**Simon Green**

**POST:**

**Head of Adoption and Fostering  
Services**

**DIVISION;**

**Children's Social Care**

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**FOSTERING SERVICE ADDRESS AND  
CONTACT DETAILS;**

**The Fostering Team  
First Floor, Bayard Place  
Peterborough  
PE1 1FB**

**Tel; 01733 317448**

**Fax; 01733 317436**

**Email: [afu@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:afu@peterborough.gov.uk)**

A guide to Fostering Services provided by  
Peterborough City Council

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**Peterborough City Council  
Fostering Service Mission Statement**

**Our mission is to make the most effective use of family based placements so that we make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people who are in the care of Peterborough City Council.**

**As a service, we aim to promote the safety, education, health, welfare and cultural needs of children in our care by recruiting, assessing, training, developing and supervising foster carers and by providing regular support, supervision reviewing and audit processes.**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2002) and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, issued by the Secretary of State, govern the work of fostering services providers throughout England and will be used in inspecting and registering fostering agencies.
- 1.2 This Fostering Service Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Standards and Regulations and will be a useful source of information to members of the Council, staff, foster carers and prospective foster carers as well as children and young people who are placed with Peterborough City Council carers.
- 1.3 Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards 2011 require each fostering service provider to compile a statement of purpose which includes:
  - The aims of objectives of the fostering service
  - A statement as to the services and facilities to be provided
- 1.4 The Fostering Service provided referred to in this statement, is within the management of Safeguarding, Families and Communities within the organisation of Peterborough City Council.
- 1.5 This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated annually by the Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption. It will be ratified by members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## **2. Status and Constitution**

- 2.1 Peterborough City Council Fostering Service is located at:

First Floor, Bayard Place  
Broadway  
Peterborough  
PE1 1FB

Tel; 01733 317448  
Fax; 01733 317436  
Email: [afu@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:afu@peterborough.gov.uk)

- 2.2 The premises used as offices by the fostering service are fit for purpose as outlined in National Minimum Standard 17.

### 3. Management Structure and Staffing

- 3.1 The Peterborough City Council Fostering Service reports to the Members of Peterborough City Council. The Lead Member for children is Sheila Scott and the Chief Officer responsible for the service is Sue Westcott, who is also located at Bayard Place, Peterborough.
- 3.2 Responsibility for Children's Social Care is delegated to Debbie Haith, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Families and Communities.
- 3.3 Part II of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 outlines the conduct of fostering agencies and local authority fostering services and therefore, the responsibilities of Peterborough City Council to ensure that 'the fostering service is provided and managed by those who are suitable to work with children and have the appropriate skills, experience and qualification to deliver an efficient and effective service' (NMS 17) and that 'the fostering service is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible child care that meets the individual needs of each fostered child and of foster carers.' (NMS 17.1)
- 3.4 There is a Service Manager (Head of Service) who manages the Fostering Service. The Head of Service – Simon Green holds a recognised social work qualification, a qualification in management, at least two years' experience relevant to fostering within the last five years and at least one years' experience supervising and managing professional staff, and are registered with the **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)**

The Fostering Service covers recruitment, supervision and support and connected persons. In addition to a Team Manager the service operates with an establishment of 11.5 qualified social workers, four of whom are Senior Practitioners. The Senior Practitioners take leads in specific areas of work.

All Social workers in the Fostering Service hold a recognised social work qualification and are registered with the **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)**.

- 3.5 The Fostering Service strives to provide a quality service which focuses on the impact on the children and young people in placement, and the foster carer families. The values outlined within the National Minimum Standards are central to the work of the service:

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.
- Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up in a loving environment that can meet their developmental needs.
- Every child should have his or her wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account.

- Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- The significance of contact for looked after children, and of maintaining relationships with birth parents and the wider family, including siblings, half-siblings and grandparents, is recognised, as is the foster carer's role in this.
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own children and to have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.
- The central importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child.
- Foster carers have a right to full information about the child.
- It is essential that foster carers receive relevant support services and development opportunities in order to provide the best care for children.
- Genuine partnership between all those involved in fostering children is essential for the standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, fostering service providers and foster carers.

3.6 Administration support is primarily delivered by the Business Support section of the council and the Fostering Panel has dedicated administration time.

3.7 All staff are subject to the Council's policy on recruitment, staffing, equal opportunities and discipline. All staff are subject to regular enhanced DBS checks; safe recruitment practices take place in line with the Bichard requirements and standard 3 National Minimum Standards Fostering 2002.

#### **4. Services Provided**

4.1 Peterborough City Council Fostering Service exists to provide Foster Care for children and young people who are in the care of Peterborough City Council.

The service aims to recruit carers in sufficient numbers and with a range of skills that will allow children and young people to remain in the vicinity of their families and other support networks. It also aims to offer positive placement choice. The service offers placements with carers who meet standard 6, National Minimum Standards Fostering 2002 supported by comprehensive training, development and support.

4.2 **The following types of placements are offered:**

##### **4.2.1 Long term (permanent)**

**Duration:** Until adulthood

**Purpose:** Permanent, substitute care

#### 4.2.2 **Extended term, task centred**

**Duration:** Two to five years

**Purpose:** To provide substitute family care where the need for ongoing work has been identified to enable the child to achieve the outcome required by their Care Plan. An example would be the placement of a teenager who would maintain contact with their family and be prepared for independent living at 18.

#### 4.2.3 **Short term**

**Duration:** Up to two years.

**Purpose:** To provide substitute care while a specific piece of work is carried out such as an assessment of parents with regard to a child's rehabilitation.

#### 4.2.4 **With family, friends – connected persons**

**Duration:** May be short or long term.

**Purpose:** To offer care within the extended family network or by friends of a looked after child or young person in line with the Policy and Operational Instructions of Children's Services.

#### 4.2.5 **Parent and child**

**Duration:** Usually up to six months duration and only in very exceptional circumstances

**Purpose:** To support the parent, protect the baby, assess and develop the parent's parenting skills.

#### 4.2.6 **Respite**

**Duration:** 1-27 days, planned series of placements not exceeding 75 nights per year.

**Purpose:** To provide respite care placements to

- other foster carers according to the terms of the Department's Respite Care Policy
- parents of children who have been approved as requiring such care.

#### 4.2.7 **Emergency (EDT)**

**Duration:** Up to 72 hours

**Purpose:** To provide emergency substitute care at very short notice e.g. when a parent is admitted to hospital or remanded in custody.

#### 4.2.8 **Preparation for independence (Supported Lodgings)**

**Duration:** Not specified, this is dependant on the needs of the young person.

**Purpose:** To provide care and support to a young person over 16 years of age, with the aim of them living independently.

#### 4.2.9 **Link Care (Short breaks for children with a disability)**

**Duration:** To a maximum of 27 days, according to the needs of the parents but not exceeding 75 nights per year.

**Purpose:** To provide respite care placements to parents of children with disabilities who have been approved as requiring such care by the Disability Panel.

## **5 Services offered to support Foster Carers**

- 5.1 A duty service is operated between 09.00–17.00 Monday to Friday by both the Fostering Service and the Access to Resources Team. The Access to Resources Team provides the gateway through which specific placements for children and young people are identified in consultation with the Fostering Duty Worker.
- 5.2 The service also provides a 24 hour telephone on call service to foster carers and is supported by the out of hour's emergency duty team.
- 5.3 Each foster carer is allocated a named Supervising social worker who is responsible for enabling the foster carer to provide for the safety, education, health, welfare and cultural needs of every child placed with Peterborough City Council approved foster carers. This is undertaken through support and supervision of the fostering household, support groups and the annual foster carer review process.  
Carers are monitored to ensure that the services they provide to children have the optimum positive impact and that any issues of concern, allegations or complaints are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. The Supervising social worker works in partnership with the child's Social worker to ensure an effective service which meets each child's needs.  
Supervising social workers identify and facilitate training and development requirements of each foster carer.
- 5.4 Foster carers are offered respite care in line with the department's policy, according to the needs of the child or young person for whom they are caring.
- 5.5 Each child placed is allocated a named Social worker who is responsible for developing, managing and progressing plans for the child, ensuring Child Care Reviews take place and ensuring carers are given robust information and paperwork to assist in their task of caring for the child.
- 5.6 The service is supported by a dedicated children in care nursing team who monitor the health of children in care and offer information, training, support and advice to foster carers.
- 5.7 Therapeutic service/support/advice is provided through dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health professionals.
- 5.8 Peterborough City Council offers direct work to children and young people in care through the Direct Intervention Service.
- 5.9 Children's Services commissions an advocacy service for all children in care aged 9-17 years through an independent agency, NIYAS.
- 5.10 There is a Complaints Service available to foster carers, children and young people if they wish to make a compliment or complaint.

- 5.11 There is a 'Children in Care Council' which advocates the needs of all children and young people in the care of Peterborough City Council in line with the Care Matters agenda.
- 5.12 Support groups for birth children of fostering carers are being developed with input and support from the Participation Officer.
- 5.13 The Children in Care Education Team provides specialist advice and support to Foster Carers and the children they care for in relation to education.
- 5.14 All children and young people in care receive a 'LACPAC' which is a booklet detailing a range of information. Work is currently taking place to develop a children and young people's guide to fostering to compliment this statement of purpose.
- 5.15 There is representation on the Corporate Parenting Group by experienced foster carers.
- 5.16 The Leaving Care Team is responsible for providing support and guidance to those young people in and leaving care. Each young person is allocated a worker in this team prior to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and Pathway Plans are formulated to support their transition to independence. The team offers a supported lodgings scheme to provide suitable placements for young people on the verge of independence.
- 5.17 Finance is provided to enable children and young people in care and their foster families to participate in activities aimed at supporting the fostering community within Peterborough.
- 5.18 Training is provided to carers in line with their needs and development.

## **6 Aims Objectives and Standards of Care**

- 6.1 The aim of Peterborough City Council in providing care for children and young people in care is to achieve the best possible outcomes. The provision of a fostering service is a key factor in the strategy of achieving this aim. The Council values the commitment, dedication and high standards of care that can be provided in foster placements.
- 6.2 The primary aim is to provide safe high quality family care for Peterborough's children and young people in care that optimises their potential and has optimum positive impact on their lives (Standard 10 NMS 2011).

The Fostering Services' primary aims are to;

- Provide a safe high quality in-house placement service for children in care so that children can enjoy sound relationships, interact positively and behave appropriately (Standard 3 and 4 NMS 2011)
- Promote a positive image of fostering and provide comprehensive support for carers, carers' children as well as the children in placement

- Ensure the child's wishes and feelings and views of those significant are heard and acted upon whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so
- Ensure children, young people and their families are provided with Foster Care Services which value diversity and promote equality (Standard 2 and 9 NMS 2011)
- Ensure education and achievement is actively promoted and children are supported in their development (Standard 8 NMS 2011)
- Continuous recruitment and retention of high quality foster placements that can meet the varied needs of children requiring placements (Standard 13 NMS 2011)
- Commit to a child/young person centred approach which includes promoting good health and well-being and ensuring children are encouraged to enjoy interests and engage in leisure activities (Standard 6 and 7 NMS 2011)
- Work in partnership with all relevant professionals to ensure the best interests of the children are paramount at all times
- Work in partnership with all areas of Children's Services to ensure comprehensive support packages are available
- Actively pursue a team culture that mutually supports a clear focus on the needs, wishes and welfare of the child and is respectful of challenge and responsive to change
- Develop partnerships with wider organisations, voluntary sector and independent agencies to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children
- Supervise, support, encourage and train foster carers to the highest level
- Contribute to the development and continuous improvement in the delivery of children's services within the city
- Commitment to the support and ongoing development of foster carers including delivery of training in line with the National Children's Workforce Development team (Standard 20 and 21 NMS 2011)
- Evaluate and review the ongoing ability of foster carers to provide care for children placed with them (Standard 20, 21 and 22 NMS 2011)
- Optimise the opportunity for choice of fostering placement and resources (Standard 15 NMS 2011)

## 7 Foster Carers

- 7.1 The Fostering Service aims to recruit a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people who are cared for by Peterborough City Council as outlined in Standard 13 of the NMS 2011.

Peterborough City Council is aiming to recruit foster families who will reflect the ethnic and religious background of our children in care. We particularly seek carers who can offer homes to sibling groups, children with complex needs and those willing to care for teenagers.

- 7.2 On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2014 there were 129 families who foster for Peterborough City Council spread across a wide range of categories. Fostering families can be single carers or couples, gay or heterosexual. Peterborough City Council welcomes applications which reflect the diversity of our society. All foster carers are expected to deliver care in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011.

- 7.3 The majority of carers live in the Peterborough area. However, there are some located in neighbouring Authorities as the service will accept applications from any perspective carers within reasonable travelling distance of the City.

The category's in which different family placements fall are:

**7.3.1 Family and Friends.** These are Peterborough City Council approved foster carers who have been approved for a specific child (or children) who were previously known to them i.e. family friends or relatives (Standard 30 NMS 2011). Connected persons carers would normally receive Level 1 foster carer payments and are allocated to a supervising social worker.

**7.3.2 Mainstream Foster Carer.** These are carers approved by Peterborough City Council for a child or children in Care who (dependent on their experience, skill development and training) have been approved as carers for a child or children in care who matches their approval status. There is a 3- tiered accreditation scheme operational within the fostering service which relates to the skills and experience of the carer and levels of care needed by specific children.

**7.3.3 Contract Care.** Some children in care or sibling groups have very specific complex needs which make them very difficult to place. The contract care scheme attracts higher levels of funding for these children for a specified period of time and then is reviewed. Sometimes the service may specifically recruit carers to this scheme for identified children. Carers who offer contract care have a demonstrable history of working successfully to achieve the desired objectives for children who may display the most challenging behaviour and children with the most complex needs.

**7.3.4 Respite Carers.** These are carers who offer a service to families of children in need and foster carers who require respite care. They can offer from an occasional day to a week block of care to support a family in crisis or foster family. This is an invaluable service which promotes the stability of both family and existing foster placements.

**7.3.5 Link Carers.** Link carers are recruited specifically to offer short term breaks to an identified family or foster carers who care for a child with disabilities. These placements can be for a few hours or a more extended period with a limit of 120 nights per year.

**7.3.6 EDT Carers.** These are foster carers who provide emergency out of hours services for children and young people who need to be accommodated as an emergency during the evening, nights or weekends. They are generally carers with specific experience of caring for a wide range of children. EDT carers receive a standby rate of pay whilst they are 'on call' and the usual fostering rates when a child is placed with them.

**7.3.7 Supported Lodgings Providers.** These are carers who provide placements for children aged 16+ to enable them to move into the world of independent living. Carers in this category may be recruited specifically or may be foster carers for young people prior to them turning 18.

## **8 Fostering Allowances**

- 8.1 Allowances and agreed expenses are paid to foster carers which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with them (Standard 28 NMS 2011). The allowance for the child is in line with that recommended by The Fostering Network.
- 8.2 The differing levels of payment allowances reflect the type of placement required for a child and the skill and experience of the foster carer. The allowance is to remunerate carers for the costs inherent in looking after a child and does not specifically constitute a wage. Unless, in contract care situations this has been negotiated as there is a need for the carers to remain at home to provide the adequate levels of care for the placement.
- 8.3 A proportion of the allowance is allocated as a personal allowance for the child. Payment rates will be found in the Foster Carer Payments Booklet.

## **9 Children**

- 9.1 The number of children placed in foster care varies due to their ongoing plans and numbers of children requiring emergency placements. As at 09.02.2014 there were 360 children and young people Looked After with 175 children placed with in-house foster carers
- 9.2 The age range of children placed is birth to 18 years. The length of stay is dependent upon the type and reason for placement ranging from a few days to the point at which the child reaches the age to live independently. Every child has a Care Plan, which is reviewed at a maximum of 6 monthly periods in line with statutory duties outlined in the Children Act 1989. Each LAC review is chaired by an independent person who seeks to ensure the Care Plan is still the appropriate path for the child or young person and their needs are fully met.

- 9.3 Where appropriate a plan to develop and maintain family contact and friendships for each child or young person is set out in the Care Plan and foster placement agreement as outlined in Standard 9 NMS 2011. Foster Placement Agreement meetings occur in a timely fashion and discuss all matters relating to the provision for the child, as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

## **10 Complaints**

- 10.1 All children and young people, their representatives, families and other persons including staff and foster carers have access to the statutory complaints processes operated by the local authority. Staff receiving complaints presented by (or on behalf of) anyone receiving a Children's Social Care Service will follow the Children's Social Care complaints procedure available through Insite.
- 10.2 An emphasis is placed on resolving complaints at an immediate local level, i.e. Stage 1 informal problem solving and these are usually dealt with by the fostering social worker and the team manager. Complaints by a child in care may be moved straight to Stage 2 of the process (Independent Investigation). Stage 2 complaints are those where stage 1 has been exhausted and/or where the complainant has elected to invoke stage 2.
- 10.3 Children's Social Care has a Children's Participation Officer (CPO) whose role it is to develop links with children and young people in care, including their key contribution to service design and development. The CPO can also raise issues on behalf of children and liaises with the Independent Advocacy Provider
- 10.4 There were 3 formal complaints in relation to the Fostering Service between 01/04/13 and 31/01/14:
- 10.5 The Complaints Team can be contacted at:

Peterborough City Council  
Central Complaints Services  
Bayard Place  
Broadway  
Peterborough  
PE1 1FB  
Tel: 01733 747474

Comments on the Fostering Service can also be made to OFSTED at the address given on Page 16 of this statement.

## **11 Procedures for the Recruitment, Approval, Training, Support and Review of Foster Carers**

- 11.1 Peterborough City Council Fostering Service ensures its practice at all times is compliant with the Fostering Services Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011. Policies in relation to the recruitment, assessment, approval training management and support of foster carers at all times reflects the expectation set down in national guidance.

- 11.2 The assessment and approval processes used by Peterborough City Council is governed by Standard 13 and 14 of the NMS 2011.
- 11.3 On receiving an enquiry from potential carers, the service undertakes an initial assessment based on a telephone discussion. Literature giving details about the work of the agency and an information pack is posted to enquirers on the same or next working day.
- 11.4 An initial visit will take place in the home of the prospective foster carer by a supervising social worker, which will outline the requirements of becoming an approved foster carer. An initial visit form is completed.
- 11.5 The potential carer completes an application form giving detailed information about themselves, their family and written consents for the service to complete necessary checks and enquiries to ascertain their suitability to foster (Standard 13 NMS 2011).
- 11.6 References obtained include:  
Enhanced DBS checks  
Health Service – G.P.  
Other Local Authorities  
Identity checks  
Relationship status  
Personal references  
Previous significant others, e.g. former partners  
DBS checks are required on all persons in the household over 16 years.
- 11.7 The applicant is required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and made available to the services medical advisor for comment.
- 11.8 The applicants are asked to provide at least three personal referees who will provide references and be prepared to be interviewed in respect of the assessment process. One of these must be a family member. Other references may be required as necessary to the application.
- 11.9 Preparation / training courses entitled 'Skills to Foster' (Fostering Network course) are provided which cover the responsibilities of being a foster carer and working with the Local Authority. These training courses are mandatory attendance and participation is monitored and assessed and form part of the assessment process.
- 11.10 A supervising social worker undertakes a full assessment based on the BAAF Form F assessment. Visits are made to the applicant's home at least on 6-8 occasions to meet, collate information about all members of the household and applicants experience and skills in relation to fostering.
- 11.11 Applicants own children are involved in the assessment process.
- 11.12 The content of the social worker's assessment is shared with the applicants for their comments and then presented to the Fostering Panel, to which the applicants are invited to attend.

- 11.13 The Fostering Panel makes timely, quality and appropriate recommendations in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care (Standard 14 NMS 2011).
- 11.14 The Panel makes recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker who considers all the information and makes a final recommendation. The Agency Decision Maker for Peterborough City Council is Sue Westcott, Assistant Director, Safeguarding Families and Communities.
- 11.15 Applicants are informed in writing about the agency decision within five working days.
- 11.16 The assessment process takes 6-8 months on average and every effort is made to ensure there is no unavoidable delay. All information obtained about the prospective carer is maintained / retained in accordance with Regulations 30 – 32 FSR 2011, Standard 26 NMS 2011.
- 11.17 Where the ADM determination is not to approve, the carers are able to make representation to the foster panel and / or to apply to the Independent Review mechanism for a review of the qualifying determination Regulation 28 (7) FSR 2011.

## **12 Fostering Panel**

- 12.1 Peterborough City Council Fostering Panel ensures timely, quality and appropriate recommendations are made about the approval of foster carers in line with the over riding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in Foster care, as outlined by Standard 14 NMS 2011. Peterborough City Council Fostering service maintains a central list of people who are deemed to be suitable to be members of the Fostering Panel.
- 12.2 The Fostering Panel constitution is made up of independent and in-house panel members. Panel sits approximately every 4 weeks to consider the approval of new foster carers, reviews of existing foster carers and the de-registration or withdrawal of approval of foster carers. Additional Panels will be convened as necessary.
- 12.3 The Fostering Panel is compliant with Regulation 23-25 Fostering Regulations 2011 and chaired independently. The Panel Chair and Panel Advisor meet on a quarterly basis with the Agency Decision Maker to discuss practice and issues. The panel is administrated by a dedicated Panel Administrator which enables the requirements of Regulation 24 to be met.
- 12.4 The fostering service is registered with OFSTED-

OFSTED  
Building C  
Cumberland Way  
Nottingham  
NG1 6HJ

Tel; 08456404040  
Fax; 08456404049  
Email; [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

12.5 For any further information please contact:

The Fostering Service Manager  
Peterborough City Council  
Children's Social Care  
Bayard Place  
Peterborough PE1 1FB  
01733 864018

### **13 Learning and Development**

13.1 Peterborough City Council ensures foster carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively (Standard 20 NMS 2011).

13.2 Training is a mandatory requirement for the continued registration of foster cares. Training is provided to:

13.2.1 Enable foster carers develop their skills and knowledge

13.2.2 Encourage foster carers to reflect and learn about their practice and impact of their parenting approach on the children and young people they look after

13.2.3 Ensure foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and protecting children from harm

13.2.4 Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through the creation of individual training profiles.

13.3 A comprehensive training programme is developed annually. In addition carers have access to the Safeguarding Board Training and other relevant courses.

## **14 Support for Carers**

- 14.1 Peterborough City Council fostering service provides support and supervision for foster carers and helps them develop their skills in accordance with Standard 21 and 22 NMS 2011.
- 14.2 Peterborough City Council Fostering Service has full membership of BAAF and Fostering Network. All carers have individual membership of Fostering Network from whom they can gain additional advice and support.
- 14.3 The Foster Carer Handbook is issued to all foster carers. It represents a combination of practical information, guidance and material for carers to use as a reference and support in the care of a child or young person.
- 14.4 A newsletter entitled 'The Fostering News' is sent to all carers every two months. It includes new ideas and developments within the fostering services and submissions from the carers themselves.

## **15 Review of Foster Carers**

- 15.1 Every foster carer for Peterborough City Council is reviewed by the fostering service on an annual basis in accordance with Regulation 28 FRS 2011. This review includes an assessment; comments from the carer; the carers own children, any children or young people placed with the carers and that child's social worker. Health checks, CRBs and all supplementary assessments, e.g. Safer Caring, Pet Assessment, etc. are undertaken as required.
- 15.2 The primary functions of the process are to appraise the standard and competency of the carer, relate to the care provided. This information contributes to the overall purpose of the review which is to assess whether the carers and their household are suitable to continue to foster and that the terms of approval continue to be appropriate.

The Agency Decision Maker makes the decision regarding the continuation of approval. The first review is always considered by the Fostering Panel.

The IRM will give prospective and current foster carers the option of having their case reviewed by an independent panel where their fostering service provider proposes to turn down their application to be a foster carer, or to revoke or amend the terms of their existing approval (Regulation 28 and 29 FRS 2011).

## **16 Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning**

- 16.1 Information is kept on a range of issues which allows for analysis and strategic planning of the service in line with the information received. Information is kept and monitored on issues such as:

- 15.1.1 Disruption rates

- 15.1.2 Number of referrals of children/ young people by age, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, disability
- 15.1.3 Numbers of enquiries to approval
- 15.1.4 Numbers of carers by age, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability
- 15.1.5 Compliance in relation to annual reviews
- 15.1.6 Complaints
- 15.1.7 Allegations
- 16.2 Such sets of data form statistical records. Analysis of this data provides managers with information that enables a judgement to be made on the quality of the services offered. It also facilitates strategic planning.
- 16.3 All records which contain significant information relevant to the running of the fostering service are kept and stored in line with Standard 17, 18, 25 and 27 NMS 2011.