



Oak Fostering

Long term therapeutic foster placements

Statement of Purpose

Contents	Page Number
Quality and Purpose of Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children we care for ○ Our ethos ○ Placements ○ Placement locations ○ Cultural, linguistic and religious needs ○ Complaints ○ Access to our policies 	Page 3 – Page 8
Views, Wishes and Feelings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation ○ Anti-discriminatory practice ○ Children’s rights 	Page 8 – Page 9
Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting educational needs ○ Access to education ○ Promoting education 	Page 9 – Page 10
Enjoyment and Achievement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities ○ External activities ○ Clubs and hobbies 	Page 10 – Page 11
Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Therapy ○ Monitoring therapeutic progress ○ Health and wellbeing 	Page 11 – Page 13
Positive Relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family contact ○ Social relationships 	Page 13 – Page 14
Protection of Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding ○ Monitoring and surveillance ○ Behavioural support ○ Physical intervention ○ Unauthorised absence/Missing persons ○ Health and safety ○ Fire protection 	Page 14 – Page 16
Leadership and Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registered Provider ○ Responsible Individual ○ Registered Manager ○ Staffing ○ Supervision 	Page 17 – Page 19
Care Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Referral and admission procedures ○ Internal care planning ○ Key working 	Page 19 – Page 20

Quality and Purpose of Care

Oak Fostering is a therapeutic fostering agency which offers specialist long term foster placements and tailor made outreach support packages to children from 0 – 18 years. As well as accepting external referrals we work closely alongside our sister company White Orchid Care to provide long term placements for children ready to move on from their residential homes.

Children we care for

We provide foster placements for children of either gender aged 0 – 18 years.

We care for children who have experienced a difficult childhood involving some form of trauma and who are not currently able to remain living with their families. The children we care for have a range of needs, they may:

- Display complex behaviours that can make it difficult for them to be cared for within a family setting
- Suffer with a range of attachment disorders or conditions such as ADHD
- Need a high level of therapeutic intervention to enable them to form successful relationships and process past experiences
- Have learning difficulties
- Struggle in a variety of settings including school
- Require a tailor made education provision
- Have emerging mental health issues
- Need direct therapy and input from health services
- Be at risk and vulnerable to exploitation for example misuse of drugs, alcohol, gang/criminal activity and sexual exploitation
- Have suffered trauma including as a result of abuse
- Display behaviour which requires a high level of supervision to ensure theirs/others safety

We work with children who have a variety of care plans including; adoption, long term foster care, and reunification to birth family. Regardless of a child's care plan we will offer the highest level of support and intervention to enable the best possible outcomes for the child. We tailor make our service packages to meet the care plan needs of each child and will offer additional services including parenting work, transition support, ongoing support to long term placements and assessment. The creative and bespoke services we offer combined with close partnership working with placing authorities significantly aids successful outcomes for children in our care.

Our ethos

We believe that every child, no matter what their experiences or background has the right to the best opportunities and outcomes in all areas of their lives. Our specialist fostering service offers children this and allows them the experience of being cared for within a loving and stable family. We are passionate about ensuring that our foster placements will be warm and nurturing homes where children can learn what a safe family home can feel like. Where they will be accepted regardless of their behaviour, will be respected as individuals, will know that the placement is their home and that their foster carers and outreach workers will fully meet their needs. Our placements will be an environment where they can be children and experience all of the positives childhood has to offer

whilst being supported to deal with the challenges they have faced. Oak Fostering holds these beliefs at the core of everything we do and believes this is what helps us achieve excellent outcomes for children.

The main outcome we wish to achieve for children is permanence within a safe and secure home to allow them the opportunity to reach their potential. We believe the skilled team of carers we recruit, the specific matching and the training and support we offer our carers is vital to creating stable placements. We aim to recruit long term foster carers from the outset, regardless of the child's plan, and we give careful consideration to matching in order to give placements the best possible chance of long term success and to avoid multiple moves should plans change.

In order to fulfil our aim to help children achieve their potential we are committed to working towards contributing outcomes including; for children to be able to understand themselves and their emotions, express themselves safely, access education, develop independence skills and form positive relationships. We believe all of these outcomes will contribute to a future where they are able to enjoy, achieve, feel safe and content and be successful in their journey to adulthood.

Our service recognises that many children will arrive having just suffered a crisis in their life, whether this be a placement breakdown or removal from birth family. Or they may be dealing with all the feelings that surround transition from their existing placement. We will provide them with a feeling of safety and containment and allow them to settle. We believe that providing children with a consistent and nurturing environment can allow them the opportunity to look at what they may be struggling with and come to terms with the journey they have experienced. We will seek to really understand their journey and trauma and consider what factors have impinged on their development. Learning what did not work in the past is crucial and at Oak Fostering it is the adult's responsibility to understand the child's past and care for them accordingly. We seek to address any of the vital building blocks that children may have missed out on through direct work by skilled carers, individual therapy, access to a range of experiences and consistent support.

We feel strongly that the relationship between the children and carers is crucial in the effectiveness of our provision. Children need to have trusting relationships with adults and we are proactive in building this type of relationship, both with foster carers but also with the consistent team of outreach and social workers who will support the placement. We promote nurture and care whilst being honest and open with the children. Oak Fostering and our carers commit to the child regardless of their plan or behaviour and we reinforce that we accept them for who they are. We appreciate that for many children trusting adults takes time and courage so we are patient and supportive whilst that trust and relationship grows.

A significant factor in the success of Oak Fostering is the therapeutic setting it offers children. Our placements will provide an environment which promotes thinking, listening, reflection, understanding and development. We have a strong focus on developing our carer's skills and abilities in understanding and responding to trauma. We believe that providing carers with the space to think about their practice and about the children enables them to be more aware of how they manage situations and of why the children respond as they do. This helps them to continually develop as practitioners and to assist the children effectively to make positive changes. We believe that work to help children deal with trauma is not only carried out by qualified therapists, it can also be through therapeutic relationships which do not solely exist within a therapy room. For this reason

our carers whilst not being qualified therapists are trained to enable them to support children therapeutically. They gain skills in a variety of therapeutic approaches including resilience, protective behaviours and understanding attachments. This range of training enables carers to use a variety of methods when caring for children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

For those moving to us from a White Orchid Care residential home we believe that if permanence is to be achieved it is vital that the progress made and attachments developed are not lost and the techniques and strategies that have proved effective are replicated. For this reason we are committed to only recruiting carers who are the best fit for the child, who are knowledgeable and skilled in caring for children who will be challenging and who will work in partnership with us. We will also utilise our close links with White Orchid Care to ensure that the carers the children already have relationships with go on to support them with the transition and whilst living in their foster placements. We feel passionately that if we are to help these children develop secure attachments we must respect their relationships and ensure that key adults can continue to be part of their lives, not to just disappear when the child moves on.

Fundamental to the success of our placements is the partnership working between Oak Fostering, the placing authority and other involved professionals. We are committed to enhancing this relationship through effective communication, recording and reporting. We will do this by providing regular feedback to the social worker on progress, any incidents and will seek to contribute to care planning for the child. We will also attend meetings, provide assessment and progress reports and liaise to ensure the placement continues to meet the child's evolving needs.

Placements

As a result of their experiences it is likely that the children we care for will have experienced multiple placement breakdowns and it is our aim to stop this pattern. For many children who we place within our foster homes they will have had their first period of stability within a White Orchid Care residential home and are now ready to take a step down the care continuum and into one of our specialist foster placements. At Oak Fostering we specialise in providing the child with a stable and secure home where they can feel safe and wanted and not have to worry about where they will move to next. It is our aim that all our placements are available as long term placements and we feel this is vital to ensure stability for the children in our care. This means that even for those children for whom a plan is to move on to adoption or returning home there is the contingency plan of remaining within their Oak Fostering placement until adulthood should their plan change. This avoids further moves and gives the child the experience of the placement being their home.

All of our foster carers can spend time alongside White Orchid Care carers in one of their residential homes, thus allowing them to gain a greater understanding of the therapeutic responses and range of techniques that have been effective. And although this will not take place in the home where their identified child lives, this gives them an understanding of the types of behaviours they may experience before a child moves into their care. This also allows the carers the opportunity to become part of the team and to get to know the outreach workers who will be supporting them once their placement arrives. Once this process is complete a transition plan will be developed in line with the child's needs and when both the child and foster carers are ready the transition into the foster home will begin.

Each of our placements will have a bespoke support package which will include practical support, carer training, reflective sessions for carers and 24 hour on call outreach workers. They will also include therapeutic sessions, therapy, and life story work with children. The outreach team will build and maintain a relationship with the child so that when support is required the child is familiar with the adult and the carer is aware of how we will approach the situation and support them. We remain very aware that the child is in placement with the carer and therefore we work alongside them to ensure that we are seen as supportive and do not disempower them or undermine them.

In addition to our main placements we will also have respite carers who can offer planned breaks for full time carers. We feel strongly that this support is essential to the success of long term placements for children who can be challenging to care for within a family. We are committed to ensuring that respite is offered in a thoughtful way with relationships being developed to allow the respite carers to become part of the extended 'family' network and thus make overnight breaks a more 'normal' experience and not a perceived rejection for the child. The term respite will never be used with the child and the main carers and respite carers will work closely together to make this a supportive and positive experience for the child.

Oak Fostering does not specify a 'type' of family we seek to recruit, instead our recruitment is specifically tailored to meet the needs of an identified child. Therefore our placements can be made up of male/female couples, same sex couples or single carers, as long as they meet the range of needs the child has. If in the process of recruitment we find carers who we feel fit within our service but are not necessarily a match for an identified child they will be recruited and retained until a matched placement becomes available. During this time they will be able to work within White Orchid Care to develop their skills and experience and provide a source of income until a placement is made.

Placement locations

Our placements cover a wide geographical area. All placements are within a reasonable travelling distance of our offices and White Orchid Care homes to ensure carers remain connected to the team, that outreach support can be provided and emergency help can reach placements quickly if needed. When recruiting carers where we have a specific child in mind this may dictate the recruitment area.

Cultural, linguistic and religious needs

Recognising, respecting and learning about a child's religion, culture, ethnicity and linguistic needs will be the role of every adult caring for the child. At referral any information about these needs are discussed and included in care planning and placement matching for the child. We will work with the child and where appropriate their family to ensure all needs in this area are met. We positively promote the children's beliefs and values and have a culture within our placements of respectful interest in different ways of life. Our carers cater for any specific dietary needs, support attendance at places of worship and help children to learn more about their own and other people's cultures and religions.

Oak Fostering works to an Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discriminatory Practice policy and we endeavour to ensure that no person is discriminated against and that every individual is respected and given access to equal opportunities.

Complaints

We promote a culture where children, families and other professionals are encouraged to express their views and concerns with adults who will actively listen to them and work towards solving the problem. Children, families and staff are reminded about their right to complain and are given information on how this can be done and what happens afterwards in their carer/children's/parent's induction pack.

Children will be visited regularly by the supervising social worker, outreach workers and service manager and during these visits will be given the space to complain should they wish. If a child wishes for another adult to express their views then this can be done via another carer, family member, independent visitor or advocacy service.

Oak Fostering understands that children can find it difficult to complain when they are not happy, especially against those who care for them. We have pre-printed; free-post post cards which children are given and can write their concerns, complaints or views on if they prefer not to raise the issue directly. These will be responded to in line with the complaints procedure. Children also have access to a phone which they can use to complain to an outside service such as the placing authority, Ofsted or Child Line.

Oak Fostering has a complaints policy which can be accessed via the website or a copy can be requested from the manager. The policy explains that all complaints will be logged, including how it was dealt with and by whom. It also includes information about addressing complaints made about the manager or the owners and external bodies where complaints can be heard.

If you wish to make a complaint please contact the manager of the fostering service, Anna Powell.

Tel: 01525 839633 or 07543 810380

Email: anna@oakfostering.co.uk

Or the Director Debbie Bavister.

Tel: 01234 767432

Email: debbiebavister@whiteorchid-care.com

If you wish to complain to an external body please contact:

- Ofsted
Regulator for Children's Residential Care Homes
URN: TBC
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 1231
- Child Line – 0800 1111
- NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

Access to our policies

Any Oak Fostering policy is available upon request. All carers have access to the full range of policies which can be found on the Oak Fostering website www.oakfostering.co.uk.

Views, Wishes and Feelings

Consultation

At Oak Fostering we encourage all children to use their voice and be part of the decisions that are made. Carers will actively seek children's views on day to day topics to ensure they feel they are respected and valued members of the home.

Supervising social workers, managers and outreach workers will also regularly seek children's views through their visits and interactions with them. Whenever there are changes within the service that affect the children the carers share the information and ask the children how they feel about that change and where possible any suggestions or requests will be acted upon.

All the foster children will be encouraged to regularly come together and attend a Children's Group to think about things that impact on them, share experiences and make suggestions to improve their care.

We formally consult with carers and the children at least once a year using written questionnaires. This data is used to form the foundations of the service plan to ensure we are including the children's and carers views in overall service provision.

At Oak Fostering we promote the relationship between social worker and child and facilitate the child having space to speak to their social worker alone. The same applies to other visitors including IRO's and Guardians.

Children will be encouraged and supported to attend and take part in reviews and meetings held about them. They will be encouraged to complete the consultation forms for their reviews and if required help will be provided. It is our expectation that review meetings are held at a location that enables the child and their family to feel comfortable; our offices can be used with prior notice. Where possible the manager will attend all reviews alongside the foster carers, SSW and outreach worker to advocate for and support the child in sharing their views.

Anti-discriminatory practice

Oak Fostering is an anti-discriminatory service which will challenge any form of discrimination or bullying. Any form of discrimination, intimidation, physical behaviour, verbal behaviour or exclusion by a carer or child will be dealt with by the manager and will be addressed within supervision, key work sessions and where appropriate the team meeting and children's meeting. Incidents will be fully investigated by the manager and or a person selected by the manager. Interviews of all those involved may be carried out so that an accurate record of the incident can be sought and action will always be taken to address the behaviour. Full details can be found within the Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discriminatory Practice policy.

Children's rights

Oak Fostering promotes children's rights and helps children to understand what they are. Details of this are contained within the Children's Guide and also discussed in day to day conversations. The guide contains contact information and guidance on their rights, advocacy services and the

Children's Rights Commission. All children are reminded that they have a right to gain access to an independent visitor via their placing authority and we encourage children to make best use of this.

Education

Supporting educational needs

All children who live in an Oak Fostering placement will be supported to attend education and where possible will go outside of the home to do so. We believe that accessing education outside the home is best for the child as it widens their world and social opportunities, however where there are cases where it is felt that tutoring at home would be in the best interests of the child, this will be supported. In these cases Oak Fostering may where appropriate find alternative venues for the tutoring to take place to allow the carers a break during school hours. However there may also be times when the carer needs to support the child during education hours and that it is felt the carers home is the best place for this.

We recognise that for many children mainstream school is not appropriate and that they require a different type of schooling. We therefore work with education provisions like Active Support and Supply Teaching to help children access education. We aim to rebuild their interest in learning through 1:1 tutoring and allow them to enjoy being alongside other children in a safe and contained way.

Where needed our outreach workers and carers will remain with the children in their education provision to help them feel settled and safe.

All children who attend any special provisions have an education plan agreed between Oak Fostering, the placing authority, parents (where appropriate) and the child. This ensures that everyone has an input and is clear how we can best meet that child's education needs.

Access to education

Educational needs will be considered when matching placements with the aim being that children can remain within their school placement where this is believed to be in their best interests. Oak Fostering foster carers will always transport children to and from school regardless of the distance and time this takes. We feel this is an important part of helping children feel safe, cared for and helping them to fit in with their peers.

Promoting education

At Oak Fostering we believe that every child starts fresh, they have an opportunity to move on from any negative experiences they may have had within education. The aim is to ensure that they feel included and interested and that they can study vocational courses as well as the core curriculum subjects.

In addition to school homework, reading and informal education opportunities are promoted daily by foster carers within the home. There is a culture of positivity around learning and the value of this and children will have access to books and other resources to promote ongoing learning.

Enjoyment and Achievement

Activities

At Oak Fostering we promote an active and engaging lifestyle for the children we care for. Our placements try and find a balance between organised activities and low key time around the home in order to establish a balanced family life. Carers and children engage in a range of experiences including walking, visiting parks, bike rides, skateboarding, playing board games, computer time, trips to the seaside, theme park visits, visiting farms and animal rescue centres.

On an average day in an Oak Fostering foster placement children will be woken by their carer and assisted with any personal care that might be required. They will be supported to sit with others to have any meals and will be encouraged to cook and help set/clear away meals alongside the adults. They will have the opportunity to play, relax and spend time with others throughout the day. They will attend education throughout the week and they will be encouraged to have hobbies and take part in things that interest them at other times. They will have their own weekly routines and informally children will think about their week with carers to ensure they have a say in what they take part in and how often. Children will not be overloaded with activities, careful planning will ensure that they have a range of experiences and that each child has a balance of spending time in the home together as a family and individual time with carers.

All children will receive pocket money; the amount is dependent on the age of the child. Children will be encouraged and supported to buy suitable things with their pocket money. They will be provided with plenty of clothing and equipment that they might need for school and other hobbies. At Oak Fostering we encourage children to take part in shopping for their own belongings but if they are not happy to do so, carers will always ensure they have the items they need.

External activities

As well as activities in the home Oak Fostering ensures that children gain a broad range of experiences by engaging in external activities. We know that routine and structure is vital for the children we work with so weekly routines and school holiday plans are used to help carers maintain a necessary sense of structure and to ensure that a balance of activities are included. Children are encouraged to make suggestions of things they would like to do and these ideas are incorporated into the plans.

Oak Fostering is fortunate to own a caravan in a beautiful part of England so this is a resource that is available for children to access frequently throughout the year, even at short notice. This is something that can be a planned trip, or a last minute reward. It may also be used where a child needs a bit of space and some quiet time away with carers. Each year consideration will be given with carers to planning a summer holiday for each child, either to the caravan or somewhere else the child and their carers choose. We do aim for children to be taken abroad where this is possible to offer them a variety of experiences and cultures. All risk assessments and checks are carried out by Oak Fostering to ensure the safety of carers and children while travelling.

Clubs and hobbies

All children within Oak Fostering will be supported to engage in any clubs or hobbies that they would like to be involved in. We will work closely with any clubs or organisations to ensure that children are safe and fully supported and where needed carers will stay with them. Carers will take an active interest in the child's activities and there will be a regular presence to ensure that the child feels supported. They will transport the children to and from any activity and if need be children will be encouraged and supported to use other transport means.

Health

Therapy

As mentioned above our focus is on enabling carers to work in a therapeutic manner with children whereby the every day approaches, language that we use and strategies we employ are delivered by skilled carers who are constantly building on their abilities. Our belief is that placing children into therapy sessions once a week will not always make long term changes in their behaviour, however therapy used alongside being cared for by skilled adults who understand a child's world and the trauma they have suffered is much more effective.

At Oak Fostering we have a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist, Simon Boots who offers direct sessions to children in addition to consultations with staff.

Simon is registered with the Association of Child Psychotherapists and British Psychoanalytic Council. He is a member of the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP) and accountable to its code of ethics. The ACP is recognised by the Department of Health for accreditation of UK trainings in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. He offers psychoanalytic psychotherapy which develops understanding in a way which makes difficulties seem less overwhelming and therefore more manageable. 'When a child, young person or adult begins to feel more able to think about and understand frightening feelings and conflicts they become less burdened by them and will be more able to engage in rewarding relationships and activities' - Simon Boots.

Simon will assess the children's therapy needs, agree a plan of therapy and who is best to provide it. Should all professionals and the child feel that they would prefer an alternative therapist or type of therapy this will be sourced with the help of Simon and other professionals.

The typical psychotherapy package is as follows:

- Collection of history
- Collection of birth parents history
- If appropriate meeting with birth parent
- Meeting with carer, manager, outreach team
- Meet with the child over 3 sessions
- Fortnightly sessions with the carers around working with the child
- Monthly sessions with the manager
- Review with carers and other professionals
- Written assessment completed by therapist
- Review the plan with authority and agree frequency of further sessions and cost

The cost of the package above is covered by Oak Fostering whilst using Simon as the child Psychotherapist; it includes the initial 3 sessions with the child. If it is agreed that further sessions are required then Oak Fostering will fund one session per week and will expect any additional sessions to be covered by the referring authority. Should an authority require additional assessments not included in the above package then unless agreed in writing at referral stage this will not be funded by Oak Fostering but can be carried out at additional cost.

Monitoring therapeutic progress

At Oak Fostering we place great importance on regular reviews to ensure that we remain aware of children's evolving needs, recognise progress and provide a service that helps the child move forward towards the agreed aims.

For children new to the service, at the point of referral we will seek clarity about the placing authority's aims for the placement and once the child moves in we will begin with a thorough assessment of the child's needs. Some of the areas we consider are: understanding the child's attachment, triggers to their behaviour, early childhood experiences and how these have impacted upon their development, and where the child is developmentally/socially/educationally. Our initial assessment combined with the agreed aims of the placement will form the basis of all work that takes place with that child and will inform therapeutic sessions and therapy planning.

For children transitioning from White Orchid Care homes this initial assessment will have already taken place. A professionals meeting will be held to explore what has been learnt about the child and what work has been carried out. Clarity will be sought about the aims for the transition and future work needed within the long term foster placement.

In conjunction with all other relevant people involved with the child we will regularly review progress in review meetings. An assessment review report will be produced highlighting progress made, any changes to needs and how Oak Fostering will meet these in advance of the review. In addition regular progress reports will be completed to ensure that all areas of progress are documented as well as possible.

Health and wellbeing

Understanding a child's health needs is not only a key area for care planning but it is essential to ensuring that a child understands the importance of being healthy and how they can achieve this. Children who have had difficult early experiences often have limited knowledge on how to be healthy and why it is important. At Oak Fostering we include any health needs within the child's care plan to ensure that both their physical and emotional health needs are met.

Our carers access local health services and ensure that all children's health needs are fully met. All young people are registered with a local GP and encouraged to attend regular health, dental and optician appointments. Whilst respecting the child's rights to privacy, they are supported in seeking advice or assistance with any health issue.

In addition we promote a culture of health and wellbeing encouraging healthy eating and access to physical activity. Like with all aspects of care planning, the amount of information we share and how much we expect children to do will be dependent on their abilities and age. Strong working

relationships with local health professionals are imperative to ensuring the children at Oak Fostering receive a good service and to ensure that professionals understand the child's individual needs.

All carers are trained in basic first aid, health and safety, food hygiene and medication and are aware of the permissions required and confidentiality procedures.

Homely remedies are kept within the carer's home for use where needed/appropriate and prescribed medication is held and administered according to the Medication policy. In line with the policy medication is stored correctly and written records are kept of all medication administered.

Positive Relationships

Family contact

Children who live within Oak Fostering placements will have individual contact arrangements and this will be discussed before placement is made. Carers will ensure that they support the child prior to any contact, within the contact (if appropriate) and after it has taken place. We understand that any contact with family members is an emotive time and needs careful handling. Where possible the same outreach worker will be used to supervise the contact, this enables the child to have consistency and for the family it enables them to have a familiar person. Our aim at Oak Fostering is to not only supervise contact but where appropriate work with the family to address any contact concerns.

Oak Fostering will demonstrate within the child's care plan how they are working with the family and child around contact. Regular verbal and written feedback will be provided to the placing authority in relation to contact and requests made by the child regarding contact will be forwarded to the social worker. Regular feedback can be provided to families to ensure that they are up to date with their child's progress; this will be agreed by the manager and placing authority.

Contact will take place at an agreed external venue and Oak Fostering will assist in sourcing an appropriate location. All contacts will be risk assessed prior to taking place and the manager will agree any contact plans.

Contact with family members must always be planned and agreed by the referring authority, those present within the contact must have agreement from the social worker that they can attend.

Social relationships

Friendships will be a focus within care planning for children at Oak Fostering. Where possible all children will be encouraged to have friends come to their home and for them to take part in activities with friends. Sustaining friendships when living in foster care can be more difficult; however our carers will create an environment where a suitable friend visiting the home becomes the norm. Children are encouraged to learn to play independently and we work with children to ensure they can play with friends in a safe and socially acceptable manner.

Play dates are a regular occurrence with friends coming to play or where agreed the children going to play at friends' houses. In cases where this is viewed appropriate 'sleep overs' can also be arranged.

Protection of Children

Safeguarding

The primary concern for all those working for Oak Fostering is the welfare and safety of all the children in our care, a robust Safeguarding policy is in place to assist with this. All carers undergo training on safeguarding so they have the ability to deal with any allegations and can identify and address any causes for concern. They are trained to be aware that abuse can take place anywhere and by anyone.

When a child moves into an Oak Fostering placement, we discuss with them how we would take care of them should they make a disclosure or allegation. The carer will make them aware that as part of safeguarding we share this information with those who need to know and will discuss with the child who this might include.

Any carer who believes that a child is at risk or who have received a disclosure/allegation from a child, will report it immediately to a member of the management team in line with safeguarding procedures. It will be reported immediately to the child's social worker and where appropriate the LADO, Ofsted and police. If the incident relates to abuse from one child to another both placing authorities will be made aware. From this point all actions required to ensure the child is safe will be followed and Oak Fostering will liaise closely with the professionals involved to ensure any advice given will be actioned and adhered to.

If any member of staff or carer has concerns about any other colleague including the manager they should follow the Whistle Blowing policy. Any allegations made about a carer at Oak Fostering will be reported to the referring authority, LADO and Ofsted. The manager will follow Oak Fostering's Safeguarding Issues Checklist to ensure that all actions are completed, fully documented and evidenced. The manager will ensure that they take any agreed action to keep all children/adults safe. In line with safeguarding procedure and in agreement with the LADO Oak Fostering will initiate its own investigation procedures to discover if there has been any misconduct on the part of a staff member/carer, further detail is contained within the Safeguarding policy. The police will manage the investigation should a crime have been committed.

Anna Powell is the designated senior person within Oak Fostering for managing allegations and ensuring the subject of the allegation is kept informed during and after the investigation. Debbie Bavister (Director) will also be aware and in the event of Anna's absence would take the lead. All those involved in an investigation will be supported by the manager; this includes the child, their family, the carers and the person who is the subject of the allegation. Oak Fostering will ensure that the process will be transparent and non-judgmental. It will ensure that the child's needs are paramount and that children's safety and wellbeing is the priority.

Monitoring and surveillance

Children that live within Oak Fostering will require a level of supervision, like most things this will be determined by the child's behaviours and needs. At the point of placement this will be agreed and the child will be made aware of how we will keep them and others safe. If a child requires one to one supervision this will be agreed by the manager and the placing authority, a plan will be put in place to show how one to one supervision might be reduced in accordance with the risk assessment.

Should any additional safety measure be required by the placing authority or as a result of risk assessment it will be agreed with the service manager and professionals involved with the child.

Behavioural support

At Oak Fostering we always try to view behaviour as a means of communication, a coping strategy developed by the child or a means of expression. Often traumatised children have developed negative patterns of behaviour in response to triggers, we will always seek to understand the underlying need and respond to this in order to eventually change the behaviour. It is important that this therapeutic approach is balanced with helping the child learn about socially acceptable behaviour and the consequences of their actions. Therefore when children do not behave in an acceptable manner we encourage them to think about their behaviour, how they might have affected others and how they can 'repair' things. This form of restorative approach helps children to own their actions and develop empathy. In addition there may also be times when consequences are appropriate for example; if a child hurts another child they may not be allowed to take part in an activity. Any consequences are fully recorded in carer recordings. For more information please refer to the Behaviour Management policy.

Physical intervention

All carers will have completed IRMA training which is a professional training course in dealing with aggression and violence in the caring profession. The course includes de-escalation, assertiveness, and the importance of body language and the use of physical interventions. The carers learn practical skills in dealing with aggression and violence and how to physically intervene in a safe way. Each child has a behaviour management plan that is agreed with the child and those with parental responsibility. This includes how they prefer to be held and what their concerns are which means that if they are held they understand what is happening and what adults will do to keep them safe.

Each child will think through with their key worker and carers how physical intervention can be avoided, whether other options can be given to the child to make the situation safe and to ensure that other children remain safe. In all cases verbal reasoning will be used and encouragement given to the child to think about their behaviour and if suitable remove themselves and go to the agreed place where they can have time to think. The use of physical intervention will only be used in incidents where;

- The child is at risk of harm
- A child is at risk of harming others
- The child is causing serious damage to property

Whenever physical intervention has been used the incident is recorded by those who have been part of the intervention. A debrief will take place between the carers and their supervising social worker and any learning from the incident will be recorded. When suitable the child will read the information that has been recorded with a carer and they will have an opportunity to decide whether other strategies would be more effective. The social worker and the manager of the home will be notified about all physical interventions.

Unauthorised absence/Missing persons

Children who live in Oak Fostering placements may have a tendency to go missing or have unauthorised absences. Where a child leaves the home without consent but carers are aware of their whereabouts and can monitor their safety, it is referred to as an unauthorised absence. Where a child has left without consent, is out of carer sight and their whereabouts are unknown they are deemed a missing person. Children living within Oak Fostering are particularly vulnerable and every action will be taken to ensure that the child is returned to the home as soon as possible.

There is a detailed Unauthorised Absence and Missing Persons policy in place which has been developed with input from the local police and safeguarding board. Oak Fostering is committed to working with any police constabulary to ensure that the child returns safely as soon as possible. The child's safety is our primary concern and every effort will be made to ensure this behaviour is reduced.

Health and safety

At Oak Fostering we take the safety of our children and carers very seriously and we carry out health and safety inspections of carers homes. Our Health and Safety policy includes systems to monitor health and safety issues, details of organisational and individual responsibilities, the use of risk assessment and health and safety records. Oak Fostering carers are trained on common health and safety issues and how to address these.

Fire Precautions

Oak Fostering has a Fire Safety policy in place which ensures carers home are safe and adhering to safety legislation. Carers are provided training on fire safety and children will be taken through the fire evacuation procedure when they move in. Carers will also work closely with the local fire service to ensure their home meets safety standards. All carers are responsible for ensuring that their home is secure and checked for any fire hazards and any significant hazard will be reported and rectified immediately.

Leadership and Management

Registered Provider

Oak Fostering Ltd,
3 Doolittle Yard,
Amphill,
MK45 2NW

Oak Fostering was founded in 2016 by Directors Debbie Bavister, Anna Powell and Richard Mills.

Responsible Individual

Richard Alewyn Mills
Oak Fostering Ltd,
3 Doolittle Yard,
Amphill,
MK45 2NW

Registered Manager & Director

Anna Powell
Oak Fostering Ltd,
3 Doolittle Yard,
Amphill,
MK45 2NW
01525 839633 or 07543 810380

Anna is a qualified Social Worker who worked for a Local Authority for over eleven years within two residential settings. Over this time she carried out the roles of child care worker, shift leader, assistant manager and acting Head of Care Practice. Anna has also completed work within locality teams and a private fostering agency as part of her social work degree and upon qualifying took up the post of Specialist Supervising Social Worker in a Local Authority trauma outreach and specialist fostering project. In addition Anna has been the registered manager within an Ofsted 'outstanding' rated White Orchid Care home for a year and will continue to be a manager within the White Orchid Care service.

Director

Debbie Bavister works closely with the registered manager of the service and is currently a director and registered manager within White Orchid Care. Debbie had worked within Residential Care for a Local Authority since 2003 and was an Assistant Manager within two care homes. Debbie has a degree in Social Work and from 2009-2012 worked as a Social Worker within both Locality and Looked after Children teams for a Local Authority.

Staffing

For some children when they are first placed they may require one to one care for a period of time, this can be provided through our outreach service and will be planned for at the point of referral. In addition to this at times of turbulence risk assessment may show that additional support to the foster carers may be required and this will be implemented if needed to ensure that the placement remains stable. Someone will be on call at all times as detailed above.

All support staff have experience or skills in working with children who present difficult and complex behaviours and we aim to train our carers to have the same. Retaining good and skilled carers is a main focus for management and ensuring that carers feel equipped, supported and motivated is essential in retaining them. They are trained to a high level and will use a number of techniques to defuse situations and ensure that everyone remains safe. All carers will complete an induction programme which includes guidance on all relevant procedures and protocols. In addition carers will familiarise themselves with the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Regulations 2011 and Children Act 1989.

Mandatory training in subjects including skills to foster, managing aggressive and violent behaviour, first aid and health and safety will be expected of all staff and carers. All staff and carers receive regular relevant training on a rolling programme and all training needs are identified within supervision, team meetings and annual performance reviews. It is compulsory that carers complete the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Care.

In addition to its carer and outreach team Oak Fostering use a limited number of consultants. Any consultants used will have experience and the relevant qualifications within their field and will have completed the necessary checks in relation to safeguarding. Details of the current consultant support to Oak Fostering are detailed below:

Simon Boots – Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

See Therapy section.

Consultant in CSE & risk analysis

Our consultant has worked as a social work practitioner for over 15 years, initially in front line child protection teams and subsequently for the NSPCC's Specialist Investigation Service. She was seconded to the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre in 2007, an organisation affiliated to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency. She was recruited into CEOP's Behavioral Analysis Unit and qualified as the center's first Psychological Profiler. She provides training and support to the homes to help identify risks and work with keyworkers to help develop their skills in helping our children's protective behaviours.

Supervision

Every member of the Oak Fostering carer team will receive monthly supervision from a supervising social worker. A set agenda will be followed with additional space for any areas the carer wishes to cover. Within supervision carers will be expected to reflect on the work they have been doing and it's also an opportunity to address any development, training needs or practice issues. Staff will also receive monthly supervision from their line manager following a similar format.

At Oak Fostering we have a culture of openness and there is an expectation that if a practice issue should arise it is reported and addressed immediately where possible. It may then be followed up through supervision.

In addition to 1:1 supervision, group supervision opportunities are also utilised. Each week the Oak Fostering manager and White Orchid Care manager reflect on issues, discuss the team, explore supervision issues and any specific areas of practice. Carers groups are held every other month to allow a space for reflection, support, learning, sharing practice and networking amongst carers.

There are also regular team meetings where the whole team of Oak staff meet to discuss a range of topics aimed at enhancing the team's skills and the quality of service offered. Sometimes the Oak Fostering staff will join White Orchid Care's team meetings where discussions focus on children for whom foster families are being sought. As part of this meeting the consultant child psychotherapist joins to work with the team in building their understanding of the children and reflective practice. In addition, Simon Boots also offers consultations to carers to help them reflect on, process and consider all aspects of the child's behaviours.

Care Planning

Referral and admission procedures

Referrals can be made by sending a referral form, we accept the Local Authorities own internal referral forms to prevent creating an additional workload for social workers. A telephone conversation would then take place between the manager and the child's social worker/referrer to ensure that our service can meet the child's needs and to enable a full understanding of the plans for the child and requirements of the placement.

If possible all referrals will be discussed within the team meeting and also between the other managers within Oak Fostering and White Orchid Care to ensure the placement is right for all involved.

If it is agreed the placement is right then ideally the manager will meet with the referrer, relevant professionals and the child to think about how the service can meet their needs and discuss a transition plan. Where possible all placements are planned, but we do recognise that often planning can happen very quickly when trying to move a child. We are however unable to accept same day emergency placements.

For children living with White Orchid Care homes the need for an Oak Fostering placement will have been identified during care planning reviews and funding will have been agreed at the relevant resource panel.

We will create a specific transition plan that fits with the child's needs and the needs of the referring authority. We are able to offer home visits to the child, home visits to their family/existing carers, meet and greet sessions with their foster carers and tea visits and overnight stays for the child in their foster home.

Internal care planning

In addition to the Local Authority Care Plan Oak Fostering will develop an internal Care Plan. This will detail all information needed to care for the child, all significant contact information, health, contact and education issues and details of how the Local Authority Care Plan is being worked towards.

Key working

Key outreach workers are allocated to each child where required to ensure that they can develop/maintain a trusting relationship with key adults and have more specific conversations regularly with consistent people outside of the foster home. Where children have previously lived within White Orchid Care homes their existing keyworker will become their outreach key worker. In addition to the informal conversations that take place, formal key work sessions will happen regularly to address a relevant topic, explore changes and to think about worries, achievements and progress. Although key workers are in place all outreach workers will be available to all the children to ensure that if and when they need time to think about things or need support, any carer can meet that need.

Where appropriate keyworkers may also complete life story work alongside the foster carers and will take a lead role in liaising with their key child's foster carers, birth family and social worker. They

will attend relevant meetings with the foster carer and the SSW. They will support foster carers who are responsible for ensuring internal paperwork is completed and memory boxes are maintained.

If you would like any further information about Oak Fostering or any of the services we offer please feel free to contact us.