Luton Borough Council

Fostering Statement of Purpose

April 2017 - March 2018
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Introduction

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services place a requirement on each fostering service provider to produce a written Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose should set out the aims and objectives of the service, alongside the descriptions and facilities of the services it provides.

This document sets out the Statement of Purpose for Luton Borough Council’s Fostering Service. It outlines the systems and provisions in place which aim to ensure the very best outcomes for children in foster care in our borough.

This Statement of Purpose links with the Children’s Guide which is provided to all children, subject to the child’s age and understanding at the point of admission to care. This document should also be read in conjunction with the Children’s Pledge, which describes the whole Council’s commitment to its children and young people living in public care.

The Statement of Purpose aims to provide information to a wide audience, including: staff members, foster carers and their families, children and young people placed with Luton Borough Council foster carers, professionals from partner agencies, and the general public.

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is available on the Council’s fostering website. The information it contains is reviewed regularly and amended at least annually.

Legislation and policy framework

Luton Borough Council’s Fostering Service aims to meet the requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster carers (CWDC 2007)

Alongside national legislation, Luton Borough Council’s Fostering Services also has clear operational policies and guidelines to ensure consistent and high quality standards of service delivery.
Section One

Background information

Luton became a Unitary Authority in 1997. The population of Luton is presently estimated at 211,000 and over 100 languages and dialects are spoken in the town. 55% of the overall population of Luton are from ethnic groups and the largest ethnic minority group is the South Asian community. Approximately 54,700 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Luton. This is 26% of the total population in the area. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 61% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole.

Our vision

Luton Borough Council is committed to provide early intervention services to support children and their families at home, endeavouring as far as possible to keep the family unit together. Should the need for alternative accommodation arise in order to protect and safeguard children, the first priority will be to explore family members and connected persons (i.e. someone the child already knows), if such arrangement is deemed appropriate.

Luton Borough Council aims to place children and young people with locally approved foster carers, whose suitability had been assessed by the Fostering Service. Over the last year Luton Borough Council has developed and invested in a dedicated and comprehensive Fostering Service that is focused on meeting the diverse needs of children who become Looked After in Luton, and thrives to meet the quality standards required by statute.

Our vision is to provide a safe, stable and caring environment which exceeds required standards in meeting the needs of all looked after children and young people, enabling them to realise their potential and to enhance their life opportunities.

We endeavour to place children and young people locally in order to facilitate contact with their birth family, preserve ties with their community and support existing friendships, as well as continuity in the same school.

We pledge to work in an open and accessible way: treating children/young people, their families and fostering families with fairness and respect, as well as promoting equality.

We are committed to working in partnership with children/young people and foster carers: actively seeking their views through shared panels and consultation, which are incorporated into future service developments and delivery.

We apply a partnership approach to providing services to carers, children/young people and their families; which includes health, education and other agencies.
Aims of the service

To provide:

- a skilled and flexible service that is responsive to the wide range of assessed needs of children/young people who require foster placements

- a variety of assessment options (including general, connected person, SGO) to secure suitable placements responsive to the child/young people’s care plan

- high standards of care in a nurturing family environment for all children and young people, where their individuality is recognised and valued, and responded to in a positive manner

- children and young people with stable placements that allow them to fulfil their potential in every aspect of their lives; whilst giving respect to and promoting their racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds

- children in Private Fostering arrangements are safeguarded and supported

- consideration for the gender, sexuality, disability and heritage of children and young people when considering making placements

- a multi-agency partnership approach with suitable protocols, which can progress the needs of children in care and their foster carers, and includes education authorities, health and social care trusts and other agencies

- a service consisting of managers, practitioners and support staff who are appropriately qualified, checked, registered with their professional regulatory councils, and supported in all areas of professional development

- a recruitment strategy for foster carers which encompasses and promotes a diversity of backgrounds thus allowing the service to appropriately match placements for children and young people not just with general carers but inclusive of kinship and connected persons

- a commitment to develop and provide ongoing training, learning and development opportunities to all foster carers and their family members

- a service which offers continued support to foster carers balanced with appropriate safeguarding and quality assurance, respects the work they do and actively promotes retention.
Objectives of the Service

- To ensure that the Fostering Service has a detailed knowledge of needs profile of looked after children such as age, disability, ethnicity and location that will inform a targeted foster carer recruitment strategy.

- To ensure there is a choice of high quality foster placements available to meet the complex and diverse needs of children and young people in care.

- To raise awareness in the community about Private Fostering, have robust assessment of suitability of such arrangements and offer appropriate level of guidance and support.

- To ensure foster carers are supported and supervised regularly by a suitably qualified social worker; and receive suitable preparation through training that enables them to respond positively to the needs of children placed with them.

- To ensure that all approved foster carers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and know how to seek advice or support if needed.

- To have clear processes and procedures in place to ensure consistency across the service and promote equality.

- To create a skilled workforce by promoting team and personal development and training for both staff and foster carers.

- Placement decisions will take into account the following (whenever possible): identified needs of the child/young person (including race, language, culture, religion, gender orientation) and carers ability to meet them, as well as the child/young person’s views/wishes and feelings.

- Siblings will be placed together whenever possible and appropriate.

- To facilitate good communication and development of effective working relationships between all parties in the child’s life; in order to promote his/her physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

- To ensure that there is meaningful consultation with children and young people, carers and staff, using a variety of methods to encourage participation.

- To agree and implement strategies will ensure the retention and continued support of foster carers and family and friends carers. This should include working in partnership with community social work, therapeutic services, corporate parenting and other appropriate lead agencies.
• To implement a flexible staffing strategy to explore the use of suitably qualified staff and short term contracts to ensure continued support to foster carers. This strategy should also include the development and supervision of staff within the Fostering Service.

• To develop strategies to improve collective responsibility for the placement of Luton children and ensure that all parts of the Children and Learning Directorate and other partner agencies understand the core function of the Fostering Service and how they can contribute to achieving this. All staff have a clear role which ensures an effective delivery of the Fostering Service regulations and standards with the aim of achieving good outcomes for children and young people.

• To review the structure of the Fostering and Adoption Service when necessary to ensure that services are provided in the most efficient and timely way.
2.1 Structure of the service

In 2013 the Fostering Team and Adoption Team was amalgamated and formed the Fostering and Adoption Service. It sits within the Children and Learning Department of Luton Borough Council.

The responsibility for the day to day running of the Service lies with the Service Manager. The current interim post holder is Olivia Ives.

The Fostering and Adoption Service has three distinctive Teams, whose functions overlap and support one another.

**The Marketing, Recruitment and Assessment Team**

The primary functions of the team are to raise awareness of fostering and adoption in the community, recruit both prospective foster carers and adopters, deliver ‘Skills to Foster’ preparation course for prospective foster carers, assess suitability of prospective carers general, kinship and connected persons and present the report to Fostering Panel and or court . The team also has two dedicated workers to complete assessments for Special Guardianship Orders. All reports are presented to court regardless whether positive or negative.

The team comprises of: a team manager, four senior practitioners, two social workers, a marketing officer and a part-time recruitment officer.
**The Support & Development Team**

The focus of the work is to provide regular supervision and support to foster carers and their family, complete unannounced visits and foster carers’ household reviews yearly, liaise with other professionals and attend/participate in meetings regarding the children in placements, complete Personal Development Plans with each foster carers and deliver some of the sector specific training courses, facilitate support groups for the fostering households, and co-ordinate special events for foster carers and their families.

The team is also responsible for arranging foster placements (short-term, and family finding for long-term), and liaising with the commissioning team when external resources are needed.

In addition, the team takes a lead on raising awareness in the community about private fostering. There is a dedicated worker who assesses and holds all private fostering cases.

The team comprises of: a team manager, a deputy team manager (temporary post), two senior practitioners, seven social workers, two placement officers, a senior administrator and four administrators (three are part-time). The administrators provide support for the whole of the service.

**The Placements Team**

Responsible for assessing prospective adopters and presenting it to Adoption Panel, facilitating preparation training for prospective adopters, family finding for children whose care plan is adoption, completing life story work and offering post adoption support.

The team comprises of: a team manager, two senior practitioners and two social workers, a life story officer, a post-adoption support officer, Adoption Panel advisor and Adoption Panel administrator.

The Fostering and Adoption Service is supported and quality assured by two separate panels: Fostering Panel and Adoption Panel. Both panels have independent panel chairs.

The service continuously updates its policies and procedures to ensure it meets legislative requirements, responds to new regulations and national initiatives, as well as practice changes informed by research.
2.2 Service Provision

The Fostering Service provides family based placements with assessed and approved foster carers for children and young people who, for some reason, are not able to remain living with their birth family. Foster placements are primarily for children aged 0-18, but some young people who are aged 18 may continue to live within a family placement under the 'Staying Put' scheme if their assessment of need recommends they require support into young adulthood.

The service offers foster placements for children/young people from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds with varying needs including: babies, persistent offenders, children with disabilities, unaccompanied asylum seekers, young mothers and those who have been arrested for a criminal offence under PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence act (1984)).

The service also monitors and supports Private Fostering arrangements, when children/young people live outside of immediate family with parental agreement. These arrangements are made privately and without the involvement of the Local Authority. However, legislation places a duty on the Local Authority to safeguard and support.

The Fostering Service is based on the third floor of the Town Hall Extension, Upper George Street, Luton, LU1 2BQ. The main reception is located at the Town Hall and it is open to the public. Opening times are: 8.45am-5pm. on Monday to Thursday, 8.45am-4.30pm on Fridays.

Range of placements provided:

- **Emergency placements**: provided at short notice initially for up to 5 working days, with a view of young people returning home or their previous or alternative placement.

- **Short-term placements**: an initial placement which provides a safe and nurturing environment to the child/young person whilst rehabilitation to home is explored, long-term needs assessed and plans for future are formulated.

- **Long-term/Permanent placements**: a provision which offers long-term stability and continuity with the same foster family for a child/young person until they reach adulthood, and if appropriate beyond.

- **Kinship and Connected Person placement**: a provision which enables a child/young person to live with extended family members or connected persons in accordance with fostering regulations.
• **Contract Care placements:** this service is provided to children and young people who require an intensive level of support. Such placements are considered and agreed by External Resource Panel for Children and Young People, based on assessed needs. The contract carers are self-employed and have a written contract for each child/young person placed with them. The Contract Care scheme is currently under review to ensure it is fit for purpose and consistently applied.

• **Mother and baby placement:** a safeguarding fostering provision for young mothers and their babies, in order to help mothers develop sound parenting skills whilst assessing their ability to care for the baby independently.

• ‘**Staying Put**’ placements: a service provision which enables young people of age 18 years or over to remain living with the former foster carers, if that is considered a suitable arrangement.

• **Foster to Adopt:** a fostering placement option under specific circumstances, when a child can be placed with carers who have dual approval.

• **Respite placement:** a service which supports foster carers and their families by providing time-limited overnight stays for children in placement with another foster carer. This is a provision to promote placement stability, agreed on individual bases.

• **Day-care:** a support provision, if/when foster carers engaged in activity which is not suitable for children and other members of the foster family are unable to help i.e. carer attending training.

• **Pace:** a service provision that provides overnight placements to young people under the age of 18 years who have been charged with a criminal offence who are not in the care of the local authority.
3.1 Recruitment and approval of foster carers

- Foster carers are approved in accordance with standards set out in the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.
- Foster carers’ assessments follow an adaptation of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering recommended Form F format. The authority also incorporates the use of competencies drawn up by BAAF and by the Children’s Workforce Development Council.
- In accordance with the standards all relevant statutory checks are made, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks for all adults in the household.
- The applicant’s birth, marriage, divorce, nationalization certificates and passports where applicable are seen.
- Employers’ references are obtained and three personal referees are interviewed in person however one may be interviewed via the telephone if it is not possible to visit in person.
- Each applicant receives clear information about the process of assessment along with details about fostering allowances.
- The assessment and approval process involves all members of the applicant’s household.
- The assessment is carried out by an appropriately qualified social worker.
- The assessment report is prepared by the social worker; it includes a clearly evidenced recommendation on the applicant's suitability as a foster carer and the types of placement appropriate to the applicant(s).
- Each applicant sees a copy of the non-confidential sections of the assessment report before going to panel and has the opportunity to make written comments if they wish to do so. They sing the paperwork as agreement to its content.
- The Fostering Assessment Team aims to complete assessments and the approval process within six months of the application being received.
- All applications are considered by the Luton Fostering Panel. Prospective carers are invited to attend the panel that considers their application.
- The recommendations of the Fostering Panel are considered by Luton’s Agency Decision Maker, who makes the decision on behalf of the Council. The assessing social worker verbally informs the applicants of the Agency Decision Maker’s decision. The ADM then writes to the applicants within 7
days to inform them of the decision formally.

- On approval the applicants are asked to sign a Foster Carer Agreement with the Council. They are also provided with a handbook and any necessary equipment.

- Where the agency decides not to proceed with an application (at any time during the assessment process), the reasons will be discussed with the applicant, along with any other options available to them. The decision and reasons will be confirmed in writing from the marketing, recruitment and assessment team manager. Applicants will be given information about the complaints process.

- Where applicants and current foster carers are given a qualifying determination concerning their approval as foster carers, which they disagree with, they have the option of applying to the independent review mechanism or of making a complaint within 28 days of the agency decision maker’s decision. This would only occur following presentation of information about the prospective or current carers has been presented to foster panel. Applicants and current foster carers will be assisted through the process if they wish to pursue this. Access to independent advice is available from Fostering Network.

The role of Adoption Panel has been reviewed in relation to Foster to Adopt placements, in order to enable dual approval. The agency decision maker can also approve adopters as foster carers under Regulation 25 to enable a foster to adopt placement.

**Appeals against refusal or termination of approval**

Prospective foster carers who have their application turned down by the decision maker following Fostering Panel, or existing foster carers who have had their approval withdrawn or altered following a review, have the right to appeal against such decisions.

The Fostering Service leaflet for carers and prospective carers attending panel explains the appeal and independent review process. Applicants can ask panel to reconsider their case or alternatively can ask for an independent review from the national independent review mechanism.

The IRM may be contacted at:

Contract Manager, Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Wortley, LEEDS LS12 6AJ
Tel No: 0845 450 3956 (charged at local rate) Fax: 0845 450 3957
Email: irm@baaf.org.uk
3.2 The Fostering Panel

The Luton Fostering Panel operates under the terms of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. The Panel considers applications from Luton Borough Council only.

The Foster Panel considers recommendations for the approval and status of foster carers; plans for children where the plan is long term fostering; the matching of children to long-term placements, and all other significant matters relating to the assessment and review of the Service’s carers. Foster carers’ annual reviews presented to Panel every three years, but reports are also sent to Panel about any significant changes in the fostering household or following allegation/complaint regarding the carers.

Membership of panel

The panel currently has eleven members comprising of:

- independent chairperson
- independent vice chairperson
- Luton Borough councilor
- adoption social worker
- child care social worker
- childcare team manager
- IRO (independent reviewing officer)
- education psychologist
- independent adopter
- foster carer from another authority
- Previously looked after person
Section Four

4.1 Support & Development Team

Supervision and support for carers

Following the approval of a foster carer, a suitably qualified social worker (supervising social worker) is allocated from the placement and support team to provide supervision and support.

The supervising social worker undertakes regular supervisory visits to the foster home; which currently in Luton is required at the same frequency as stated by legislation for the child’s social worker. They also make unannounced visits to the placement, at least one annually. All visits are documented on a pre-designed format and stored on the carers’ electronic files. Any discussions outside of the visits are recorded under ‘observation’ on the same electronic system.

There are two elements to supervisory visits: to facilitate information sharing and support for carer, as well as quality assurance of the placement to ensure the standard of care is appropriate and responds to the child’s individual needs.

All foster carers are subject to an annual review, at which their continued approval is evaluated. The process is co-ordinated by the supervising social worker and the review is chaired by the independent reviewing officer for Fostering, who is based in the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team. This is a formal review of the work the carers have undertaken during the previous year, and is an opportunity to reflect on achievements and learning. The review reports (which include feedback from carers, child/young people in placement, his/her social worker and independent reviewing officer) is presented to the Fostering Panel in the case of all first reviews, when changes are proposed to the carers’ registration or cases of concern.

The Fostering Service aims to ensure carers are able to access support at the time that they need it. During office hours the allocated supervising social worker is usually the first point of contact for the foster carer and is able to offer support, advice, guidance and supervision regarding most matters relating to fostering.

In addition, every child in placement has an allocated social worker who would be able to advise the carer about issues relating to that child. In case the allocated social worker is not available the neighbourhood teams operate a duty system,
whereby the social worker on duty would respond to any urgent problems or issues.

Support to foster carers outside of office hours is delivered by the Emergency Duty Team, whose contact details are 0300 300 8123. In order to provide local support to carers and EDT, a member of the Fostering Service is available for consultation over the telephone at weekends. This service is staffed on rota bases by senior practitioners and team managers from both teams.

Luton Fostering Service has a corporate membership with The Fostering Network, which extends to all foster carers registered with us. Through this provision carers receive regular update/newsletter from The Fostering Network and are able to access mediation service and advocacy support, as well as legal advice.

Consultation and information sharing with foster carers is an integral part of a productive and positive working relationship. The Placement and Support Team co-ordinates regular Foster Carers’ Forums where planned changes are discussed and carers’ views are sought, as well as guest speakers being invited to give information or update on support services linked to fostering. The forum is followed up with a newsletter, which is sent to all foster carers.

The benefit of peer support is well recognised and valued in fostering. In Luton there is a monthly support group meeting for foster carers facilitated by the Placement and Support Team, and an annual Summer Event which is a fun day for all foster carers, their families and children in placement.

In January 2014 the ‘Children who Foster’ group was re-launched for foster carers’ own children, with further dates planned throughout the year. The group provides a platform for informal support to children who have the unique experience of having to share their home and parents’ attention with other youngsters not related to them.

Luton’s foster carers receive a Boarding Out Allowance in respect of each child placed with them. The boarding out allowance comprises of two parts: child allowance which is age related to the child placed, and a skills element recognising the evidenced skills of the carers. The authority does not operate a fee based system.

**Training and tier progression for foster carers**

Training is viewed by the service as an integral part of personal and professional development for staff and carers alike. Learning, which can take a variety of forms, may help carers feel better equipped and more confident in responding to the needs of vulnerable children.

The current training programme for foster carers (2016/17) covers pre-approval training for potential carers, induction raining for newly approved carers, as well as Training, Support and Development Standards. The comprehensive rolling
programme of training is designed to meet the changing development needs of foster carers throughout their fostering career and include; mandatory and core-training, counselling skills for foster carers, stand-alone courses on a variety of topics, training delivered by partnering agencies (education, health). In order to promote wider participation training is available not just during day-time but in the evenings and weekends as well, with broad options for on-line training.

All training courses are evaluated by feedback from foster carers, which informs future commissioning. The training programme is updated annually.

Training is linked to payment for skills through the Tiered Progression Scheme for Foster Carers. Carers can progress in the tier system by meeting the competencies for the next tier level and evidencing the required learning activities. Targets for learning are identified by the foster carer and their supervising social worker, and outlined in the carers’ individual Personal Development Plan (PDP). The PDPs are reviewed six monthly and updated annually. Information from the PDPs helps identify the training needs of the service for the following year.

The document on Tiered Progression Scheme for Foster Carers is available on the Council's fostering website.

4.2 Support to foster carers from partnering agencies

Support to foster carers and children in placement are also provided by a number of local agencies/organisations.

Therapeutic service

The Luton Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service offer therapeutic input to children and young people in foster placement.

Health support services

The Fostering Service is committed to ensure the health outcomes for children in care continually improve. Professionals work with foster carers to promote healthy living and eating, as well as tracking dental and eye health.

There is a designated nurse for children in care who, with the support of other health professionals, oversee the children/young people’s six monthly/annual health assessments and has input into the health promotion of children in care.

Brook offers training, advice, information and support to young people and carers in the field of sexual health.
The Young People’s Drug and Alcohol Service is accessible to foster carers for advice and guidance on individual bases. They also deliver a number of training courses to foster carers.

**Education support services**

The Fostering Service recognises the importance of improving school attendance and education attainment for children in care. Foster carers are expected to attend personal Education Planning Meetings with the young people, and any other education meetings. There is an expectation within Children’s Services that holidays are not taken in term-time, and children are not routinely taken out of school.

There is a dedicated group of professionals in the Virtual School, who have close links with local schools and are available for consultation and support to foster carers. They are able to advice on a wide range of topics from exclusion to the use of pupil premium plus, and willing to support carers in education meetings. There is a close working relationship between Virtual School and Fostering Service with joint training, seminars and information events.

**Other information/support sources for foster carers:**

- **Introduction pack:** is sent to out to foster carers following their approval or given to carers by the supervising social worker at the first visit. It comprises the following:
- **Foster Carers Handbook:** it gives factual information to carers about the Service, roles and responsibilities. It contains information about a variety of topics: from procedures to safer caring or attachment issues. The handbook is updated regularly.
- **Foster Carer Agreement:** outlines expectation of the working relationship between carers and the Authority. Carers are given two copies: one to keep and one to sign and return.
- **Allowances booklet:** gives detailed information about financial matters, including Boarding Out Allowances, any additional payments and age related pocket money.
- **Information leaflets:** bite-size information pamphlets by The Fostering Network on relevant topics: benefits, insurance for foster carers. Information about advocacy, independent visitors.
- **Training Programme for foster carers:** a comprehensive guide to all training available to foster carers.
- **Guide to Complaints and Complements:** outlining procedures to making a complaint or complement.
- **Training, Support and Development Portfolio:** a folder containing CWDC workbook and guidance.
5.1 Safeguarding Children and Quality Assurance

The Fostering Service adheres to all the policies and procedures of the Local Authority and that of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in keeping children safe and responding to concerns raised when children are thought to be at risk or receiving sub-standard care. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures can be accessed through their website.

Children’s Guide

At the point of entering foster care children are provided with a Children’s Guide, subject to their age and understanding. Foster carers are expected to support children in understanding the contents of the Guide and make the services accessible for them.

The Children’s Guide includes information about the advocacy service and independent visitors available for children in care and how they can find out more about their rights. It gives details of how children can contact their independent reviewing officer or Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern.

The Children’s Guide was updated in 2015 in collaboration with the Young People Panel to make it more informative and appealing to children and young people.

Complaints

The Fostering Service uses Luton Borough Council’s Social Care Complaints Procedure to manage complaints made by foster carers or on behalf of the children in their care. The complaints procedure is in 3 stages.

Stage one – problem solving

Most problems or concerns can be resolved informally by discussion with the relevant social worker or their manager. The complaint is acknowledged within five working days and the complainant will receive written notification of the outcome within twenty eight days.

Stage two – independent investigation

Where problems or concerns cannot be resolved informally at stage one, an independent person is appointed to investigate the complaint. They will report to an adjudicating officer within twenty eight days.
Stage three - review panel

If the complainant is not satisfied with how the investigation was carried out at Stage two, they may request that the matter is considered by a review panel. The review panel consists of three independent people, one of whom will act as the chairperson. The panel will recommend any action that in their view needs to be taken in respect of the complaint.

If the complainant is not happy with the final outcome of the social care complaints procedure they will be advised how to contact the local authority ombudsman.

Complaints made by foster carers regarding the services they receive will initially be dealt with by the team concerned i.e. if it is a complaint against one particular childcare team it will go to their manager to address. If the problem or concern cannot be resolved informally by discussion with the particular team/manager, the complaint will go to the service manager to address.

Allegations

In all circumstances allegations made against a foster carer or member of their family are investigated and responded to in accordance with the current Luton child protection procedures, in collaboration with the local area designated officer (LADO) under the procedures for investigating allegations against adults caring for children.

Foster carers can access training on ‘Safer caring and Managing Allegations’, which clearly outlines the different processes depending on the nature of the allegation. The training is co-delivered by the local area designated officer.

All foster carers, subject to an allegation or complaint are offered independent support from the Fostering Network’s Advice and Mediation Service.

Monitoring the quality of the service

The Fostering Service is monitored and inspected by a number of qualified professionals:

- the quality of the work of the Fostering Service is monitored at all levels through the staff recruitment, supervision and appraisal processes

- the independent fostering panel adviser and the fostering panel provide ‘quality control’ for foster carers’ assessments and reviews

- the independent reviewing officer for fostering provides a quality assurance function in relation to foster carers, supervising social workers, and the fostering service from chairing of foster carers annual reviews
• feedback is also obtained from key stakeholder via foster carers’ reviews, child care reviews and the complaints procedure

• foster carers receive at least one unannounced visit annually, and four to six weekly supervisory visits by their allocated supervising social worker

• the service manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the Service monitors a range of matters identified in the relevant regulations and National Minimum Standards to ensure the standards are met and developments of the Service are in line with new legislation and national trends

• Periodical inspection by Ofsted.

**Review of the Statement of Purpose**

The Fostering Service reviews and updates the Statement of Purpose annually to ensure its aims, objectives, services and facilities provided remain appropriate and meet the needs of service users. The Statement of Purpose will have to be approved by the elected members of the Council before uploaded to the Council's website.

The information contained in the Statement of Purpose can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats on request.

**Key contact details**

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<th>Fostering Service</th>
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<td>Luton Borough Council</td>
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<td>Website: <a href="http://www.luton.gov.uk/fostering">www.luton.gov.uk/fostering</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>The Children and Young People Advocacy Service - NYAS</th>
<th>Tel.: 0300 330 3131 or 0151 649 8700</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egerton House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tower Road, Wirral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.nyas.net">www.nyas.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CH41 1 FN</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:help@nyas.net">help@nyas.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaints and Representation Manager</td>
<td>Tel: 01582 546747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton Borough Council</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:feedback@luton.gov.uk">feedback@luton.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Hall Extension</td>
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<td>Upper George Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediation and Advocacy Service</td>
<td>Tel: 0845 013 5004</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Fostering Network</td>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.fostering.net">www.fostering.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>87 Blackfriars Road</td>
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<td>London</td>
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