



Rising Stars Fostering Statement of Purpose

Launch Dreams Nurture stars

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INTRODUCTION

The statement of purpose for Rising Stars Fostering details how the organisation manages its services, its suitability for providing fostering services, and its commitment to ensuring the well-being of children in its care. It also illustrates the processes in place for recruiting, training, and supervising foster carers and staff. This statement is linked to the Children's Guide, which is tailored to each child in placement based on their age and comprehension level.

The Statement of Purpose for Rising Stars Fostering has been crafted to align with various legislation and guidelines, including:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement & Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Assessment & Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations, Volume 4 Fostering Services (July 2013)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- GDPR Act 2018

This Statement of Purpose is submitted to Ofsted and is accessible to employees, carers, local authorities, children, young people in placement, and the public via the RSF website www.risingstarsfostering.co.uk, or in hard copy upon request. The Registered Manager and Senior Management Team review and endorse the statement of purpose annually.



Company Status



Rising Stars Fostering Ltd was founded in 2019 to offer fostering services to vulnerable children in accordance with the Children Act 1989. This private limited company is registered in England under Company Number: 12093427 and recognized as an Independent Fostering Agency by Ofsted through the Care Standards Act 2000, with Ofsted URN: 2714788.

Currently operating in the London region, Rising Stars Fostering is led by Managing Director Amel Bensmail, who serves as the Responsible Individual. The agency's decision maker is Melanie McGuinness, and the registered manager is Lilian Omondi, both experienced social workers.

The company's objectives include recruiting and supporting Foster Carers by providing services, advice, training, and assistance. Rising Stars Fostering Limited, a private limited company registered with Ofsted, operates in England. At Rising Stars Fostering, we firmly believe that every child, regardless of their circumstances, deserves to shine brightly. Our committed team diligently matches children with compassionate foster families to ensure they receive the care and support needed to thrive.

The Senior Management Team is accountable for strategic planning for the company. This process involves aligning business plans with service user needs, company goals, financial obligations, organisational structure, and policies that adhere to new legislation, guidelines, and regulations. They set performance goals, oversee monitoring, and ensure legal compliance. The Registered Manager reports to the Managing Director, engaging with other Directors monthly to assess service quality, and performance, and align business objectives with the agency's Business Plan. Central Support Services comprise Human Resources, Finance, Training, Quality Assurance, Compliance, Recruitment, and Placement Teams.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES



Rising Stars Fostering is dedicated to providing top-quality care for children under the care of our foster families. Our commitment is to offer a service that aligns with the required standards of care as per statutory and regulatory guidelines. Regular inspections by Ofsted are conducted, and inspection reports can be accessed on the Ofsted website. Moreover, several local authorities we collaborate with conduct monitoring assessments to ensure compliance with contractual obligations.

Aims:

- Providing high-quality services for children and young people in care, of all ages, whose needs are determined by the Local Authority to be best addressed through placement with a foster carer.
- Ensuring that children and young people are placed only with carers who have been recruited, assessed, approved, and reviewed in compliance with legislation and official guidelines.
- Supporting, supervising, and offering ongoing training to carers to enable them to meet the specific needs of the children and young people under their care.
- Continuously enhancing our services by evaluating and gathering feedback to refine our practices.

Objectives:

- To support and promote diversity, equality and inclusion.
- Providing high-quality care in a safe family environment and meeting each child's individual needs according to the care plan
- Offering 24-hour support for caregivers and children/young people
- Promoting the child's identity and self-esteem as well as the child's overall health and well-being, including physical, mental, and emotional welfare
- Encouraging educational achievement and success and promoting contact.
- Preparing children and young people for adulthood
- Seeking and incorporating the views of children, families, and caregivers
- Providing accessible training to enhance caregivers' skills in meeting children's needs
- Matching placements with caregivers based on the child's specific requirements and the caregiver's expertise.
- Regularly evaluating placement stability to prevent breakdowns and adverse outcomes for children
- Sustaining the knowledge and skills of staff, managers, and panel members through effective training and development programs
- Periodically reviewing agency policies, procedures, and practices. Using research findings to enhance practice.



MANAGEMENT AND TEAM STRUCTURE



Management structure

At Rising Stars Fostering Ltd, the management operates within a matrix structure under the Managing Director's (MD) guidance. The Senior Management Team shapes the strategic direction, which includes the Managing Director and Fostering Manager. The staff's roles and responsibilities are detailed as follows:

- The Managing Director supervises the company's business operations, determines its strategic direction, and oversees its management.
- The responsible individual ensures the service's smooth functioning and staff well-being.
- The Registered Manager is accountable for managing social work services, support services, and foster carer development. They ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, lead daily operations and company development, and oversee various aspects like data protection, contract management, placements, health and safety, staff recruitment, and development.
- Service Manager: The position involves assisting the registered manager in the daily operations of the business and exploring optimal methods for implementing strategies.

The management team convenes regularly to assess the company's business requirements.

Team Structure

Social worker

The SSWs have the duty of assessing, supporting, supervising, and conducting annual reviews of foster carers. They collaborate closely with the Looked After Children's Social Worker, attending Looked After Reviews and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings with foster carers to ensure optimal outcomes for children in their care. SSWs oversee the continuous professional development and training of foster carers, ensuring completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) and maintenance of portfolios. Additionally, SSW organises and leads support groups for foster carers and delivers out-of-hours services directly to carers.



MANAGEMENT AND TEAM STRUCTURE



Placement Team

The Placement Team's role involves coordinating with Placing Authorities to oversee the matching and placement procedures. Duty Officers communicate with foster carers about potential placements and ensure they have all the essential information to support children and young people in their care. By following a thorough matching process, Duty Officers ensure that children are placed with suitable foster carers.

Recruitment Team

The recruitment officer's role includes executing the recruitment and marketing strategy, coordinating career recruitment and retention activities, and conducting the initial screening of potential foster carers. Collaborating closely with the senior management team, referral coordinators, and panel administrator is essential to guarantee a personalized, timely, and successful "carer journey" for recruiting and retaining foster carers.

Support Workers

Support Workers offer tailored support services to foster carers, children, and young people, drawing on experience from various child-related environments. The assistance provided is focused on time constraints and problem-solving, aiding individuals in personal growth and progress. Their services may involve occasional transportation, overseeing contact sessions, and engaging directly with children.



COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION



At Rising Stars Fostering, we acknowledge the diverse society and communities where we operate. We value diversity, honor differences, and advocate for equal opportunities.

Our goal is to hire a diverse range of staff and carers to mirror the local demographics and cater to the varied requirements of the children under our care. While acknowledging the presence of discrimination, prejudice, unfairness, and oppression in various spheres like education, employment, health, and social care, we remain dedicated to empowering all children, young individuals, foster carers, and staff to achieve their full potential without being hindered by discriminatory or oppressive practices within our organisation.

At Rising Stars Fostering, we aim to create an environment where every child, young person, foster carer, and employee feels respected, valued, and treated equitably. We need to integrate our values into our daily interactions with all stakeholders and service users. As an organization, we embrace and honor diversity and individuality among our foster carers, children, and young people by hosting inclusive events where we can share and learn about each other's cultures, traditions, beliefs, and cuisines.

Promoting equal opportunities for all individuals by eradicating discrimination, bias, and prejudice.

Equality

The diverse array of both visible and unseen distinctions shapes our unique identities.

Diversity

Establishing a work and care environment that respects all individual differences and not only acknowledges but also promotes the value

Inclusion



SERVICES PROVIDED BY AGENCY



Rising Stars Fostering collaborates closely with several Local Authorities to comprehend their unique requirements regarding foster placements in specific regions. Subsequently, as an agency, we aim to enlist foster carers from diverse backgrounds capable of offering top-notch foster placements for children under the care of Local Authorities.

The types of placement provided are:

Emergency: Rising Stars foster carers can offer unplanned emergency placements for individual children or sibling groups. Referrals can be submitted during office hours or via our Out of Hours service.

Respite/Short Breaks: We have foster carers who offer respite placements, either regularly or for one-off holiday breaks.

Short-term: Placements can vary in length, sometimes lasting up to two years, as they are commonly associated with additional evaluations of the child, family, or other related individuals, which may include court proceedings.

Long-term: Plans are frequently made while the child is still in short-term care. We offer placements with foster carers who have expertise in transitioning children to permanence or independence. Long-term or permanent placements are provided by foster carers who can accommodate individual children or groups of siblings. Long-term placements are matched in accordance with the placing authority procedures.

Bridging placements: This is a component of the child's long-term strategy before moving to a more permanent placement as part of their transition.

Parent and Child: We offer foster care opportunities that provide young parents with support and guidance to enhance their parenting skills. Additionally, foster carers can aid Local Authorities in assessments by sharing insights on parenting abilities and capacities.

Solo Placements If the placing authority specifies that the child/young person must be the sole placement, this requirement should be clearly outlined and addressed during the referral stage to ensure proper matching with suitable available carers.



SERVICES PROVIDED BY AGENCY



Asylum seekers: Some of our carers specialise in unaccompanied and asylum-seeking fostering. These young people have often been separated from their families, either in their home country or while travelling to the UK. They arrive distressed and overwhelmed, sometimes with limited English skills. They need a great deal of reassurance, care, and support. It can be incredibly fulfilling to witness them adapting to their new life in the UK.

Additional needs Placement: Some of our foster carers provide specialised care to children facing various challenges such as physical disabilities, medical issues, or learning disabilities. This type of support is available from infancy to adulthood, and it may be short-term, long-term, or periodic respite care. In addition to assisting the children, you will also be supporting the parents or guardians by offering essential respite and aid, making this type of care exceptionally fulfilling for all involved.

Remand Placements: Remand placements fall under a specialised category of fostering, where foster carers offer temporary care to youth awaiting court dates for alleged offenses. This serves as an alternative to young individuals residing in custodial care prior to their court appearances.



MATCHING



Matching children and young individuals with suitable approved fostering households is a meticulous process. Ensuring the correct match is crucial as it enhances progress, enriches experiences, improves outcomes for children, increases placement stability, and fosters positive experiences for all involved.

At Rising Stars Fostering, we understand that each child and young person is unique, with diverse needs and abilities that require equally unique fostering environments. Our foster carers possess a variety of skills, knowledge, and experience, and our goal is to thoughtfully pair children and young individuals with carers who have the appropriate skills and approach to meet their specific requirements.

Our dedicated Referral Coordinators are available to support Local Authorities in finding the best matches for children and young individuals. They collaborate closely with Supervising Social Workers, Foster Carers, and Local Authorities to ensure optimal matches are established.

The matching process carefully considers the child's needs with the following key areas:

- Safeguarding
- Personal history
- Identity/ethnicity/culture/religion
- Health, wellbeing and disability
- Education/Training/Employment
- Contact
- Behaviours and risk management
- Interests and aspirations
- Overall objectives/outcomes for the placement



MATCHING



The matching process will also consider the following with the carers:

- Their terms of approval
- Their availability
- Their knowledge, experience and skills
- Their location and distance to school, friends, contact and LA
- Their ability to transport
- Their experience in facilitating and/or supervising contact
- Any other looked-after children in placement
- own children and other household members

Rising Stars Fostering ensures that a placement will only be suggested if the prospective foster carers can adequately meet the assessed needs of the child or young person. In cases where a child is placed with carers of a different ethnicity or culture, there is a strong focus on maintaining the child's identity and heritage through both practical and emotional assistance. For children with specific health requirements, the agency considers the availability of specialized health services within a reasonable distance from the foster home. If needed, the agency will provide additional specialised training to ensure that the carers are fully equipped to address any specific health needs.

Foster parents receive all the information accessible to the agency to enable them to make well-informed decisions regarding their ability to meet the specific child's requirements and care plan. They actively participate in the matching process and have the ultimate say in determining whether they can provide a home for the child or young person. The BAAF Form F Assessment and Carer Profile are provided to the Local Authority for all placement offers, giving them comprehensive details about the carer and fostering household.

Rising Stars Fostering provides an emergency placement service outside regular working hours. During these times, referrals will be handled by on-call duty workers who assess the needs and situation of the referred child and assign them to approved emergency foster carers. The on-call employees have complete access to foster carers' details even after working hours, ensuring consistent quality matching, just like during office hours.



CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Children in foster care have a voice in their care and assistance, with input sought from them, their family, social worker, and Independent Reviewing Officer. They have access to independent support and their perspectives are considered in improving foster care services.

Participation and consultation

Rising Stars Fostering is dedicated to involving all stakeholders in reviewing and improving its services. It values the perspectives, desires, and emotions of children and young people to ensure that the services meet their needs and stay relevant in a changing landscape. Consultation methods include questionnaires, online surveys, events, activities, and feedback forms for carer annual and LAC reviews. Each child and young person receives a copy of their guide and monthly magazine, featuring engaging news and articles tailored to their interests.

Children and young individuals in our care, including those who do not communicate verbally, are supported to actively participate in decisions concerning their lives. It is essential to sensitively assist them in understanding situations where their preferences may not be possible and to clarify why alternative actions are taken in their best interest. Rising Stars Fostering collaborates with local authorities to ensure that children have access to an independent advocate and, if appropriate, an independent visitor, encouraging them to engage these individuals in their affairs.

Support for Children in Our Care

Children under our care come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. They must receive appropriate care to help them dream big and succeed. For this purpose, Rising Stars Fostering has set out detailed guidelines in the Foster Carers handbook. These guidelines define the expectations for all foster carers and staff members.

Rising Stars Fostering takes pride in maintaining high standards for their foster homes, ensuring safe, nurturing environments that prioritize health, education, protection, continuity, diet, and stimulation.

Each child has their own bedroom, unless authorised by the Placing Authority to share with siblings. At Rising Stars children are encouraged to personalise their rooms. It is mandatory for each child to have a quiet study area within the foster home, along with access to a computer and the internet as needed.



CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Foster homes undergo annual assessments to ensure a safe and healthy environment, monitored through monthly supervisory visits. Play areas are secure and equipped, with all play equipment regularly inspected for safety and functionality.

In every foster home, there is a unique Safe Caring Policy that outlines the boundaries within the household. Risk assessments and plans tailored to each child's situation and behaviour are established in the child's Placement Agreement/care plan at the beginning of their stay. Policies regarding sanctions, control, restraint, and complaint procedures are accessible to children, parents, and professionals, ensuring consistent and fair responses to behaviours. Strictly prohibiting any form of corporal punishment, foster carers aim to provide a stable environment and the necessary role models for children.

Rising Stars Fostering has implemented safeguarding measures that align with Working Together to Safeguard Children to ensure the well-being and protection of all children. It is mandatory for all staff and foster carers to strictly follow these procedures. If there is a need to reassess any safeguarding practices for the provision of safe care, this will be carried out in collaboration with the Children's Social Worker, Carer, and, if feasible, the young person.

Foster carers have access to the agency policy regarding missing children. In cases involving risk, vulnerability, or child sexual exploitation, a strategy will be devised and confirmed with the Child's Social Worker, the young person, and the foster carer. This process is crucial for ensuring the implementation of suitable safeguards and supervision, enhancing risk awareness, and promoting risk mitigation. The agency will request that the Local Authority conduct return-home interviews after every missing incident. If this is not done, the agency's SSW or support worker will step in to investigate the reasons for the disappearance and offer appropriate assistance.

We advocate for the right of children and youth to receive therapeutic services from Local Health Authorities. By fostering strong partnerships with health professionals in each locality, we aim to utilise local services whenever feasible. In cases where local services are not accessible due to time constraints or complexity, we offer our clinical services to address the identified needs of children. Our team of psychologists and psychotherapists primarily offers clinical assistance to our foster families, and direct interventions can be arranged for children and adolescents. Tailored therapeutic services are available to the agency, foster carers, and children based on individual requirements, provided by qualified, experienced, and accredited professionals engaged to deliver the necessary support.



CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Rising Stars Fostering is dedicated to ensuring that every child and young person has the right to receive a suitable education that allows them to reach their full potential. To achieve this goal, the agency ensures that each child in their care has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is regularly monitored and reviewed by their school, social worker, and foster carer. Foster carers need to be actively involved in this review process.

Moreover, the agency collaborates with schools and authorities to assess children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to determine if an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is necessary. Setting educational objectives is crucial in establishing a strong academic and social base for children to strive for and attain their academic goals, including formal qualifications.

Whenever feasible, children are enrolled in local schools to foster friendships and engage in community-based extracurricular activities. In cases where children do not have a school placement, the agency expects the Local Authority to provide teaching hours or alternative educational options, or to arrange customized educational packages at an additional cost.

Children and young individuals placed will receive a copy of the Children's Guide upon placement. They will be guided to comprehend its content through their foster carer or in a one-on-one session with the agency support staff. The Supervising Social Workers will regularly meet with each child to understand their opinions on their care and living situation. Services provided for children include:

- Assistance in discovering hobbies, sports, or interests
- Support in developing independence skills
- Tailored one-on-one sessions to address identified needs
- Group sessions to tackle specific themes such as social media usage
- Social gatherings and activities for both foster children and carers, like arts and crafts, cooking contests, and festive celebrations
- Preparation of life stories or permanency plans
- Access to national organisations catering to looked-after children and youth.

Rising Stars Fostering, working alongside foster carers, Social Workers, and Health Authorities, assesses the specific health requirements of each child under our care. All children in our care are registered to GPs, dentists and opticians.



CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL



Rising Stars Fostering is dedicated to enlisting a wide array of foster carers capable of meeting the needs of our children and young individuals. The agency aims to recruit individuals and families from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds across the community. By doing so, they can bring a range of skills, knowledge, and experiences to the fostering role. It is essential to create a supportive and inclusive environment that values and celebrates diversity while respecting individual differences.

Application Process

The Rising Stars Fostering website offers potential carers valuable information, case studies, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist them in making well-informed decisions about fostering through the agency. Prospective carers can submit enquiries online or by phone, and a Carer Recruitment Officer will conduct a Pre-Initial Visit Screening Call within 2 days of the enquiry. Based on this information, a decision will be made on whether to proceed with the enquiry and send out an Enquiry Pack. All applicants must:

- Have a spare room
- Be over 21 years of age
- Be able to provide transport for children e.g. school, contact
- Be able to keep detailed records relating to children placed
- Be able to attend all relevant meetings
- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Have some IT skills

Initial Visits

After the Initial Enquiry Screening Call, the recruitment officer will schedule the Initial Visit (IHV) with the applicant at the applicant's home. This allows the agency to provide detailed information about fostering, address any inquiries, and assess the accommodation. The discussion will cover skills, knowledge, motivation for fostering, and practical needs. If suitable, an Application Form will be provided either physically or through an online link. Following the IV, all reports are evaluated by a manager, and the outcomes are communicated to the prospective applicant.



CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL



Transferring Carers

Rising Stars Fostering acknowledges that caregivers have options and sometimes choose to switch between approving agencies. In such cases, the agency adheres to the Fostering Network Protocols and collaborates closely with the respective Local Authorities to ensure a smooth transition without negatively impacting the care of children in placement.

Assessment Process

All foster care evaluations are conducted using the BAAF Form F, which is filled out by qualified, registered social workers in compliance with relevant legislation, guidelines, and policies. The assessment process consists of two stages (Stages 1 & 2) and is anticipated to be completed within a maximum of 4 months. This process involves various statutory checks and references, such as DBS, Local Authority Checks, Medical evaluations, Ex-Partner References, Personal References (x3), Employer References, Health & Safety checks, and Letting Agent consent. The assessor will establish a visit schedule to ensure a timely and focused assessment. Applicants will be invited to participate in Skills to Foster Training led by internal trainers, and the feedback from this training will be incorporated into the assessment process.

The assessment is thorough and evidence-based, generating a detailed report that includes individual profiles, past and current relationships/partnerships, support networks, interviews with household members of all ages, lifestyle, parenting experience and capacity, and promoting diversity. The report will offer recommendations regarding approval terms such as the number and age range of children, and types of placements, and will be presented to the Fostering Panel. Additionally, applicants must fill out a Safe Care Policy, Fire Evacuation Plan, and Carer Recruitment, Assessment & Approval Profile. After completing the assessment, applicants are invited to the fostering panel with their assessor for the panel's approval recommendation.

The fostering panel

The panel consists of agency employees and independent members with diverse backgrounds in health, education, social care, and fostering, including individuals who have been in the care system. Its purpose is to offer impartial quality assurance, assess new applicants, and review the approval of current caregivers.



CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL



After the panel presentation, applicants will promptly receive the panel's recommendation regarding their application. However, the final decision on the approval of the applicant will be determined by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). If applicants disagree with the ADM's decision, they have the right to appeal directly to the agency or the Independent Review Mechanism within 28 days. If, at any point during the assessment, the assessor finds that the application does not meet the required standards, this will be immediately discussed with the Team Manager. Any areas needing improvement must be thoroughly addressed, and if additional training or support will not suffice to meet the standards, the assessment will be stopped. The assessor will notify applicants of this outcome and the reasons within 48 hours, and provide a brief report for the fostering panel's review.

Post Approval

Upon approval, applicants are recognized as newly approved carers and will be provided with written confirmation of their approval. They will also be given a Foster Carer Agreement outlining their duties as well as the agency's obligations, which requires their signature. Each fostering household will be assigned a dedicated Supervising Social Worker responsible for the induction of new carers and training plans. They will also assist carers in fulfilling the Training, Support, and Development Standards (TSDs) within the initial 12 months following approval.



ANNUAL REVIEWS



Each foster household is subject to an annual Foster Carer Review (AFCR), with the possibility of an earlier review if significant changes occur. These circumstances include:

- Post the final strategy meeting of a Section 47 investigation involving a carer(s)
- Initiation of serious allegations/complaints or Section 47 investigations against a carer
- Relationship breakdown in the approved carers' relationship leading to one carer leaving the household. Both carers will be reviewed unless notice of resignation is given
- A carer begins living with a new partner
- Significant changes in the carers' lifestyle
- Diagnosis of a serious illness for a carer
- Death of a carer
- Lack of collaboration by a carer with the agency, including poor engagement and participation in training and professional development.

The Supervising Social Worker must collaborate with foster carers to prepare a comprehensive report for the AFCR. This report should incorporate feedback from the child/young person, their Social Worker, school, and other involved professionals, including the birth family if applicable. Additionally, it should consider the input of the carer's children, especially those residing in the foster home. The report should highlight the carers' progress in achieving outcomes for children and present how they interact with the children and young people under their care.

The AFCR is a chance for both the agency and foster carer to review the past year and plan for the future, including assessing the carer's training and development needs for the upcoming year. The report includes a clear recommendation on whether to continue approval or make changes to the approval terms, supported by rationale and evidence.

Following approval, the first review report for the carers and every third annual review will be submitted to the Fostering Panel for recommendations. All review suggestions are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for decisions, with carers receiving written notifications about those decisions.



SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF FOSTER CARERS



Every foster carer is assigned a Supervising Social Worker who offers guidance and support regarding the child's care and placement plans. Social workers assist foster carers in enhancing their skills and provide consistent structured support. Additionally, they assess the carers' abilities and progress annually, while encouraging and engaging in training programs for foster carers, their biological children, and the children in their care.

The interaction between Supervising Social Workers and foster carers should maintain a professional approach, focusing on the well-being of the children under care. Any issues or worries should be openly discussed to find a mutually agreeable solution in line with fostering regulations and agency guidelines. Regular visits by Supervising Social Workers to see the children are crucial in this process.

Supervisory Home Visits

Rising Stars foster carers will receive monthly supervised visits from a qualified social worker. The social worker's role is to provide support to the foster carers and evaluate the quality of care the child is receiving. During the visit, the focus is two-fold. Firstly, it should address the foster carer's professional growth, family interactions, safe caregiving practices, and tasks outlined by the Agency. The follow-up visit should focus on the child's goals, progress, and growth. Social Workers should conduct a minimum of two unannounced visits per year, along with an annual completion of a Health and Safety Check List before the evaluation.

Support

Support entails listening, understanding, and assisting in finding practical solutions to cope with challenges. A successful relationship between a Supervising Social Worker and a foster carer encourages open and honest communication about family issues and the challenges they face in caring for the children. Foster carers receive support to implement the children's care plan as part of a collaborative team effort. Supervising Social Workers rotate to offer local out-of-hours support to foster carers 24/7. Additionally, a Duty manager serves as a backup for the out-of-hours service, ensuring that both staff and carers have access to the necessary support and information.



SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF FOSTER CARERS



Support Group

Rising Stars Fostering organizes Carer Support Groups across various locations in the region to ensure accessibility for all foster carers. These groups, led by Supervising Social Workers, offer a valuable platform for sharing information, delving into thematic topics, staying updated on research, addressing practice changes, policies, and laws, and fostering social interactions among foster carers.

Events

At Rising Stars Fostering, we organize a range of events to assist carers in connecting with other carers and staff, recognising carers' accomplishments, and engaging in charitable fundraising endeavours like Macmillan. Our events encompass casual carer coffee mornings and lunches, support groups, award ceremonies, and an annual 'End of Year' gathering. The variety of events offers everyone a chance to get involved, fostering relationships within the community and the agency.

Skills Development

Enhancing skills involves motivating foster carers to participate in training sessions, supporting them in applying the acquired knowledge, and utilising resources like literature, guidance from the Fostering Manual, and other relevant materials.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



Rising Stars Fostering is dedicated to ensuring that all foster carers are well-trained, knowledgeable, and prepared to provide children and young people under their care with a positive fostering experience. The agency's training programme is informed by the statutory framework for fostering, aiming to deliver comprehensive training to foster carers to ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality care.

The training focuses on equipping foster carers to support complex children and young people, aiming to enhance their quality of life. Foster carers are trained to understand and engage effectively with various racial and disadvantaged groups within communities. To stay current with the latest guidance and legislation, the training program undergoes annual updates and reviews. Furthermore, the agency has integrated therapeutic training to boost the capabilities of seasoned foster carers.

The training program includes a mix of face-to-face sessions, seminar workshops, webinars, and online modules to cater to different learning preferences and schedules of foster carers. Regular review of training audit data is conducted to ensure compliance and address any potential gaps. Foster carers follow a Personal Development Plan that is reviewed during ongoing supervision and annual appraisals.

Mandatory Courses: As part of ongoing Learning and Development, there are several courses carers must complete:

- Skills to Foster (pre-approval)
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Attachment
- Data Protection
- Record Keeping
- Administration of Medication
- Safer caring and Managing allegation
- Training, Support & Development Standards (within 12 months of approval)
- First Aid training
- De-escalation



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



Therapeutic Training: The Therapeutic teaching approach recognises that every challenging behaviour a child exhibits is rooted in an underlying emotion. As adults, our responsibility is to assist and educate children in comprehending these feelings, rather than reprimanding or penalizing them for their difficulties.

Rising Stars Fostering aims to ensure all our carers are therapeutically trained. We provide a diverse array of therapeutic training designed to assist the children and young individuals under our care. These individuals may have experienced trauma, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, loss, or other significant disruptions before entering foster care.

Tailored Training: Alongside the essential therapeutic and mandatory training, Rising Stars Fostering provides a diverse array of additional training, including specialized sessions like parent and child, ADHD, Sensory training, and Remand. These training sessions are complemented by monthly visits, annual reviews, support groups, and feedback from our Foster carers.

Employees Training: Rising Stars Fostering promotes professional development for all employees by offering access to e-learning, webinars, training courses, and practice development workshops. These opportunities are available internally within the agency and externally, including Local Safeguarding Boards. Employees receive ongoing training overseen by their regulatory body and undergo an annual appraisal that includes an assessment of training requirements and professional development. Personalised learning plans focus on career growth and specific interests, enhancing the quality of services. There is a training program offering courses for employees to attend, apart from those provided by Local Safeguarding Boards.

Each Social Services Worker (SSW) can become a 'Team Champion' by spreading knowledge and sharing expertise in crucial areas like CSE, Education, Health, and Independence/Staying Put for the broader advantage. Managers can enhance their skills through a comprehensive learning program that prepares them to tackle the demands of their positions effectively.



FINANCE

Foster carers under Rising Stars Fostering receive a weekly fostering allowance directly deposited into their bank accounts, which varies based on the type and complexity of the placement.

The fees paid include maintenance payment that covers clothing, pocket money, birthday, and seasonal expenses for the child or young person in their care. They also get a holiday allowance equivalent to two weeks of fostering pay.

Savings for children in care are deducted and managed in individual accounts by Rising Stars Fostering. Detailed information on rates and allowances is provided to each foster carer, along with an Annual Statement.

Foster carers are considered self-employed and are responsible for determining their Income Tax and National Insurance liabilities. The Fostering Network offers advice on this matter, and membership fees are covered by Rising Stars Fostering for all foster carers.

Local Authorities can contact the agency directly for information on charges for different placement types and support services. The agency's finances undergo an annual financial audit.



COMPLAINTS



Rising Stars Fostering's complaints procedures focus on addressing complaints promptly and fairly. The Registered Manager and service manager oversee the monitoring of complaints and their resolutions.

Complaints Policy

Everyone, both children and adults, who interact with the company is entitled to a high-quality, professional service. If they believe they have not received such service, they have the right to voice their concerns and have those concerns addressed. All complaints will be acknowledged within seven working days. The response will specify if the issue can be resolved at Stage 1 or if further investigation in Stage 2 is necessary.

Stage 1 Complaints – Informal Resolution -To address complaints efficiently, our preference is to resolve them informally at a local level. We encourage complainants to first discuss their concerns with the individual involved to allow for clarification and potential resolution. If an informal resolution is not achievable, a meeting will be arranged between the complainant and the relevant line manager. A formal letter outlining the resolution process will be provided by the Registered Manager. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the initial outcome or wishes for another employee from Rising Stars Fostering to handle the matter, they should contact the Registered Manager, who will investigate within seven working days.

Stage 2 Complaints – Formal Consideration - The appointed Manager will conduct a thorough investigation and deliver a written response within 21 days detailing the investigation's findings. A meeting will be arranged by the Manager with the complainant to discuss the report when deemed necessary and suitable. In case the complainant is not satisfied with the report's outcome, they are required to provide written reasons for their dissatisfaction to the Manager. The Manager will then organize an independent review of the complaint within 28 days.

Stage 3 Complaints: If the complaint remains unresolved after Stage 1 or Stage 2, and the reasons for this are clearly communicated in writing, the complaint will move to Stage 3 for an independent review. This stage is typically overseen by the Director or another Senior Manager, with a 28-day investigation period aimed at resolving the complaint. If the complainant is still unsatisfied, they have the option to seek guidance from the Regulatory Authority.



COMPLAINTS



Name and Address of Inspection Body

All the activities of NFA are inspected and regulated by Ofsted who can be contacted at the following: • Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD • General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231 • About Concerns: 0300 123 4666 • Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner

Children and Young People may also make a complaint to the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, based in England. They can do this by going to the appropriate website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk (for England)

Support

Rising Stars Fostering is committed to ensuring that its complaint procedures are easily accessible, effective, fair, and independent. Children and adults may require assistance and guidance when making a complaint. A child may seek support from their parent, social worker, Independent Visitor, or foster carer. If a child wants to raise a concern about their care, they should be helped to access independent advice and support from their Independent Reviewing Officer. Additionally, any complaint from a Looked After Child will be directed to a recognized advocacy service if desired. Foster carers can seek assistance from a supporter, advocate, or their Supervising Social Worker when filing a complaint about the agency according to this policy, or when necessary, about the placing authority under the appropriate local authority's complaints process.

Allegations of abuse

If any child protection-related complaint is reported to a Rising Stars Fostering employee, it will promptly be forwarded to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The responsible authority and Ofsted will also be notified. Should an investigation reveal potential child protection concerns, the ongoing inquiry will be paused, and the relevant Local Authority LADO will be promptly informed, with notifications sent to the responsible authority and Ofsted. Complaints against a registered individual will be investigated by the Managing Director.



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP



The Fostering Network

Rising Stars Fostering is affiliated with The Fostering Network, the primary charity in the UK focusing on fostering. Through this membership, they can link individuals and groups to improve the well-being of foster children. The Fostering Network works to promote enhancements in foster care at UK, national, and local levels to increase awareness about fostering.

NWG

Rising Stars Fostering is a corporate member of NWG, a network dedicated to combating child sexual exploitation. They provide high-quality training programs that our team members take part in. Each team member has a personal connection with NWG to access support and advice for specific cases.



CONTACT DETAILS



Essential Addresses and Contact Details

Children's Commissioner

Address: Children's Commissioner for England

sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Free and confidential contact lines for children and young people:

Tel: 0800 528 0731

Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Coram VOICE

Helpline: 0808 800 5792

Email: info@coramvoice.org.uk

Web: www.coramvoice.org.uk OFSTED

Ofsted

Address: Ofsted,

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



Rising Stars Fostering Limited

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