



## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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### 1. Introduction

Our vision for setting up Viola Fostering Services is to create a fostering service for children and young people which offers them a chance of the best level of stability that can be achieved at whatever point they are at in the care planning process. Our expectation for Viola Fostering Services is that in addition to excelling and going beyond the requirements of all of the National Standards, our foster homes should be places where we would be happy for our own children to stay and where children and young people can fulfil their potential, whatever that should be in. Our commitment is to put children first and to work in partnership with all parties involved in order ensuring that every child achieves the best outcome.

### 2. Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance contained in the Care Act 2000 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (amended 2013). It will be reviewed annually, amended as necessary and approved by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.

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 placement and also aligns with the Looked After Children's Pledge, to ensure our commitment to offering children and young people the best foster placements that meet their needs and offer them a happy, safe and settled environment.

***This Statement of Purpose is intended for use by employees, foster carers, local authorities, children and young people in placement and the general public.***

### 3. Our Vision

Is to provide children and young people the chance of the best level of stability that can be achieved at whatever point they are at in the care process.

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#### **4. Our Aims and Objectives**

Viola Fostering Services is committed to ensuring that foster care provided for children in its care is of the highest quality and guarantees the best possible standards for care, safety and life opportunities which contribute to addressing national and local aspirations, namely:

- Children and young people are healthy and resilient
- Children and young people are supported and safe
- Children and young people are ambitious and achieve everything they are capable of achieving
- Young people have the skills for a successful transition to adulthood
- Children and young people are engaged as productive citizens

A child's welfare is the paramount consideration. Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving and caring family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond. The needs and wishes, welfare and safety of the child or young person are at the centre of Viola Fostering Services.

In order to achieve this, we recruit foster carers who can support a parent and child placement and work with the Agency to undertake the assessment of the parenting capacity and be able to work with the parent if the outcome is separation. If children are placed with carers at the beginning of an application to court, we want to support the children with contact and through the court process and then on permanence or a return home without disruption. If a young person is to be placed on a long-term basis, we want to support them through to Staying Put. We want children and young people to have a sense that they have a place where they belong and where they are cared for and about (NMS1, 2,3,9)

We want to support children and young people to fulfil their potential, whatever that should be. Exam success is a measure but we are ambitious for children and want them to have informal and formal experiences of learning for the enjoyment this brings and the way this can open up options for the future. We would want any child or young person to be able to participate in an education environment so they are able to be part of a social world. (Fostering Regulations 2011, Part 4(16), NMS8)

We work with children and young people to ensure they have the opportunity to experience a variety of leisure opportunities with the foster family and separately so they gain confidence, skills, enjoyment and resilience. The latter is

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also developed by the skills the foster carers have in emotionally supporting children and young people to make sense of their world and feelings. The outcome of this is that our children and young people will have good emotional health and a positive self-view. (NMS7, 2)

We aim to actively support and promote contact with birth family whenever it is in the child's interest to do so and at whatever level of contact will work best. We expect foster carers to have genuine empathy towards birth families and be able to display this so it maximises the chances of birth parents and carers working together for the child and young person. We want children and young people and family members to feel their birth family and history are given due place in a child and young person's life. (Fostering Regs 2011 (14))

We want parents to know key people in the organisation and feel they could contact us if they were concerned or to feedback whether they are satisfied with the care given to their child. We will provide opportunities for them to do so. We like children and young people to feel confident that they can have a significant say in their care planning but that they can also affect the work of the Agency. We take the time to seek their views and get them involved in their reviews built within the review of the organisation. We aim to have a working relationship with stakeholders and so we actively seek feedback from local authority social workers and IRO's during a child's placement and at the conclusion and we provide quarterly feedback to commissioning services.

We support children and young people to develop a sense of the community in which they live and we encourage their participation in this. We aim to extend the sense of community to include Viola Fostering Services.

## 5. Our Services

Viola Fostering Services offers a full range of short term, long term or respite foster placement choice for children and young people from 0-21 years. Carers receive comprehensive training both pre and post approval and our thorough, competence based assessment process goes a long way in ensuring the best possible matching.

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Below are the placements we offer.

- a. **Short-term Placements** - Working towards short-term goals whilst for example a child's mother is in hospital or whilst detailed assessments and Court proceedings are undertaken, and until an agreed permanence plan can be implemented for the child.
- b. **Long-term/Permanent Placements** - Caring for children and young people whose 'permanence' care plan indicates that their needs will best be met in a foster placement that takes them through to adulthood and independence.
- c. **Unplanned, Short Notice or Emergency Placements** - Emergency placements are available including the possibility of placements for asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors or other specialist placements.
- d. **Short break and Respite Carers** - offering support to children's current placements, provide respite for birth families or provide a home base for children attending residential schools.
- e. **Parent and Baby Placements** - offered with carers who have experience and interest in helping parents to develop their parenting skills and can assist in assessing parenting abilities to safely care for the baby.

## 6. Recruitment, Training, Support and Reviewing of Foster Carers

### a. Recruitment

Staff and foster carers are all appointed following safer recruitment practices and good practise guidance, such as interviewing former partners of foster carers, taking up additional references, speaking to previous employers, undertaking DBS checks which will be updated every three years. There's regular supervision for staff and carers and this involves live supervision. Ability and progress is reviewed annually in Foster Carer Reviews and Annual Performance Development Reviews for staff. Any staff employed on advisory or occasional basis is also subject to DBS, safeguarding and identity checks (Fostering Regs 2011, Part 4 (21) Part 5(28))

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Training for staff and carers in safeguarding and safe care is mandatory and is updated annually. Foster carers are expected to develop a household safer caring policy and a child specific safe care plan. This is regularly checked and annually updated in line with the Annual Foster Care Review. Foster Carers homes are evaluated under Health and Safety Regulations and good practice at the point of approval and this is updated annually too.

Unannounced visits are undertaken to the foster home on two occasions per year, in line with best practice. Visits, announced and unannounced by support staff to fostering households also take place to ensure the children have regular contact with others on a regular basis. Supervising social workers are expected to see children or young people in placement and build a relationship with that child or young person too. The agency monitors the frequency of the child's social worker visits to ensure children and young people have the opportunity to see others to raise concerns if there is any need to. Foster carers are expected to maintain records about a child, which document any significant events, and for accountability. (Fostering Regs 2011, Part 4(22))

We update and consult with foster carers on local and national developments in fostering and services for looked after children to keep them informed of current proposals and developments, which affect them.

## **7 CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE**

Viola Fostering Services provides a guide for all children and young people and their families. This includes information about the agency, the service offered and a range of contact numbers.

The guide produced in conjunction with young people, is available in two formats – for younger children or teenagers, both can be translated into other languages as required. Details of the complaints/suggestions procedure and contact details for the relevant governing body are also included in the children's guides.

## **8 Our Leadership Team**

Viola Fostering Services is managed by highly qualified and experienced managers who have worked within the health, social care and psychology

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industries for majority of their careers, bringing a wealth of strategic, professional and operational skills, which are applied to provide a child, centred service.

**a. Other staff will include:**

**Our social workers** are qualified and experienced. They are linked to a maximum of 10 carers in order for them to be able to spend sufficient time supporting carers and children.

**Support workers** assist the supervising social workers with routine tasks. They will also undertake direct work with children, including supporting children out of school and training them in independent living skills.

**Therapeutic consultations** are available to foster carers who are dealing with children with challenging needs. The package will be commissioned around the needs of the placement and can include a number of sessions, face to face or telephone consultation.

**Carer Mentors** are experienced foster carers who are available to prospective and approved foster carers to provide guidance and support based on their own experience.

**9 Equality and Diversity**

Viola Fostering Services recognises the diverse society and communities in which we all live and work. We aim to recruit people from all backgrounds to reflect the demographics of the regions we cover.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy applies to staff, foster carers and young people. Training is mandatory for all staff and carers to assist them to understand and value diversity. We want all children and young people in our placements, our foster carers and employees to feel valued and treated equally and fairly. Our goal is to ensure our values are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our stakeholders and service users.

The service considers the needs of all young people referred in the areas of race, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, ability and geographic origin, and will endeavour to promote each young person’s sense of identity through appropriately matched placements, and direct work in relation to a young person’s cultural background.

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There is a commitment to challenging individuals or groups who discriminate against any of our young people in anyway and diversity is celebrated through daily living experiences and educational programmes.

## 10 Complaints and Compliments

### a. Complaints

All young people in foster care receive information with regard to the complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. This information is available in the Young People's and Children's Guides to Living in Foster Care.

Foster carers are provided with complaints information.

Any allegation about foster carers, which come within a Child Protection remit, will be investigated within the Safeguarding Procedures.

Any concerns about the Fostering Service may also be addressed to Ofsted (contact details below).

### b. Ofsted and Inspection

We are inspected as part of Ofsted's single agency inspections of services for children in need of help and protection; looked after children and care leavers, which take place once within a 3-year cycle. These inspections are carried out in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering.

Ofsted can be contacted at:

c. **Ofsted,**  
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

0300 123 1231 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

### d. Useful Contact

Childline NATN 1111 London, E1 6BR

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Telephone 0800 1111

**e. NSPCC**

Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP. Worried? Need to talk?

0808 800 5000

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**f. Children's Commissioner**

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner

Office of Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

T: 020 7783 8330

E: [Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Freephone for children and young people

T: 0800 5288330

**g. Voice**

Voice is a national children's charity that empowers children and young people in care and in need and campaigns for change to improve their lives.

320 City Road London  
EC1V 2NZ

T: 020 7833 5792

[www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org) E: [info@voiceyp.org](mailto:info@voiceyp.org)

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