



*Ofsted Reg" No. SC057262*



# Statement of Purpose

## Aims and objectives

Children of Colour Ltd aims to provide a range of fostering services, which are consistent with best practice, National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services Regulations.

The primary aim of the Agency is to provide a range of high-quality foster placements suitable for meeting the diverse needs of children looked after and young people. The ethnic origin, cultural background, gender, religion and language of children looked after and young people and the particular needs of children with disabilities will be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when matching placement decisions are made.

The secondary aim is to provide consistently high-quality services and support to our foster carers by employing sufficiently experienced and qualified social work and other support staff.

To achieve these aims the Agency has the following objectives:

- To have in place a recruitment strategy, which focuses on the recruitment of carers who are able to meet the diverse needs of children looked after.
- To provide varied training courses according to a yearly training plan and based on foster carers needs so that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.
- To maintain a 24 hour support services to ensure that approved foster carers feel valued as part of the Agency and their services as carers are retained.

- To increase the number of carers able to provide placements for young people in need of specialist care.
- To promote the educational achievement of children looked after and young people by ensuring that foster carers are supported and are able to create and support opportunities for children to achieve.
- To promote positive emotional and physical health of children looked after and young people by ensuring that foster carers help children and young people placed with them maintain good health and are encouraged to make use of leisure time.
- To ensure that foster carers are supported in gaining access to multi-disciplinary teams in the fields of education, health and mental health for advice and support in managing the particular needs of looked after children and young people in their care.
- To maintain a competitive, annually reviewed fostering fees and allowance structure, based on nationally recommended rates, ensuring all payments are paid on time.
- To ensure that staff employed by the Agency have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their duties. Each member of staff has a personal development plan, which supports opportunities for training, and developing their skills and staff are regularly supervised, monitored and appraised.

# Principles and Standards of Care

Children of Colour is fully aware of the need for children and young people to be placed in foster families of the highest standard and quality.

We understand that, regardless of a child's past experiences, they deserve to be placed in an environment that is safe and will be culturally enriching for them; an environment where they are shown love and provided with experiences that build their self-confidence and develop a high sense of self-worth.

We believe that children should be placed in an environment in which they learn to develop positive and supportive relationships.

We believe that the children of today are the future of the nation and they should be placed in an environment that will prepare and empower them for adulthood.

The Agency principles are based on Every Child Matters (ECM) Outcomes Framework. The five ECM outcomes which we want to achieve for all children and young people, placed with our carers are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

Foster carers are expected to comply with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services which are underpinned by the Fostering Services Regulations (2011).

The principals and standards guiding the service are:

- The interests and welfare of children is paramount at all times, and this will be reflected in all aspects of the work.
- Children looked after will be consulted regularly on all aspects of their placement, and their wishes and feelings taken into consideration. The wishes and feelings of birth children in fostering households will also be sought and taken into consideration.
- All work will be undertaken in partnership with children looked after, their parents, birth families, foster carers, social workers, and other relevant departments and agencies.
- The Agency will support carers in advocating for children placed in our care to gain access to any support and/or specialist services that they may need.
- The Agency will operate in a manner that promotes equality, values diversity, challenges discrimination, and aims to meet the varied needs of children looked after. In recruiting foster carers and making placements consideration will be given to the needs of children including race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, language and gender.
- The safety and the protection of looked after children will always be an overriding priority for the Agency.

- The needs of children looked after will be met in respect of education, and this will be achieved by working closely with the foster carers and other professionals. The Agency will work with the child's social worker whilst supporting and advising carers in ensuring that each child has a stable school placement, a personal education plan, and the educational support necessary to meet his or her needs.
- The needs of children looked after will be met in respect of health including mental health, and this will be achieved by working closely with other professionals including the CLA Nurse and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, where necessary.
- Carers will be supported and advised to ensure children are encouraged and supported to develop independence skills appropriate to age and ability and encouraged to develop friendships and leisure interests in line with their wishes and individual care plans.
- Contact between the children looked after and their birth family, or other important people will be recognised and promoted where this is consistent with the care plan. Where it is possible and consistent with the child's best interest, siblings will be placed together.
- Foster carers and staff will be valued and supported in a way that assists them to provide safe and effective care for looked after children.
- The service will be regularly monitored against a range of quality standards and will strive for constant improvement.

- Foster carers, birth & foster children, children's social workers and important family members will be asked to provide feedback. They will also have access to the procedure for making complaints.

The Foster Carer Handbook is online and each carer has access to it. This is reviewed periodically. The handbook provides a full description of the Agency, policies and procedures as well as some practical advice about how to provide care of the highest quality.

## Services Provided

Children of Colour Ltd is a fostering Agency which recruits, trains, assesses, supervises, supports and, regularly, reviews foster carers.

Many of our foster carers are within our local authorities based in London, we also have carers in Milton Keynes & Staffordshire, however, we also actively aim to recruit carers in all London boroughs and across the UK.

The Agency provides the following types of placements for children and young people aged from two to eighteen years:

- **Short term/Task-centred**

These placements are usually planned periods of care and usually for a specific purpose however short term/task-centred carers also provide placements on an emergency basis.

- **Emergency**

These placements are usually unplanned and for unspecified periods of care. They can, however go on to be long term placements

- **Long term**

When children cannot return home and adoption may not be the right option, Local authorities may seek a long-term placement as an alternative form of permanency for the duration of childhood. These placements usually occur in a planned way. There may be times, however, when circumstances change and a short-term placement becomes long term.



- **Children with disabilities**

Carers with the relevant experience and training are able to accommodate children with disabilities.

- **Specialist fostering for 'harder to place' young people**

Carers with the relevant experience, skill and training are able to accommodate children and young people with extremely challenging behaviour as well as offending behaviour, self-harm and substance misuse.

# Management Structure

Children of Colour Ltd is owned by Samantha Springer

Samantha is currently the responsible individual. She is actively recruiting for a registered manager. Samantha was the registered manager for the last 19 years. She is still supporting the staff, carers and children until a registered manager is appointed.

Samantha has the following qualifications:

Diploma in Social work (1994)

Level 5 Diploma in Management (2007)

NCFE CACHE level 3 Diploma in counselling (2021)

Registered with Social work England

Samantha has been working within fostering for over 25 years. Prior to setting up Children of Colour in 2004 Samantha had experience of working (within the Local Authority and Independent Fostering Service) in child protection; youth work; counselling, children and families; assessing and supporting foster carers and supporting children in foster care placements.

Samantha strongly believes that her role is *to improve the quality of life for our children and young people.*

The Agency is inspected by Ofsted, the regulatory body, at regular intervals.

# Organisation Chart

In recruiting staff, the Fostering Service work to the requirements set out in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering.



All of the social work staff hold a professional social work qualification and are registered with social work England. They all have a range of experience in working with children and families, child protection and in fostering.

The Placements Administrator is NVQ Level 3 qualified and has extensive Child Protection experience. She has also provided support to children and families to prevent family breakdown. She has been with the agency for ten years.

All staff have skills and experience that are particular to their positions, and all staff members receive regular and appropriate training and supervision.

## **Recruitment, Assessment & Approval of Foster Carers**

The Fostering Service recruits and supports foster carers in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering and the Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Assessment, Approval, Training, Management and Support

When prospective carers contact the office, they are engaged in conversation which seeks to ascertain and assess their motivation to foster, what facilities they have for fostering and whether or not they have the support of their partner and other family members.

They are sent an initial application form, some information about fostering in general and some information about Children of Colour and advised that they may call the office of Children of Colour should they require more information or help completing the forms.

Records are kept of callers and information packs sent out. Where the applicant does not return their form after a fortnight, they will be contacted by phone to verify receipt of the application form and if they might have any further questions.

Once the application form is returned, an appointed social worker contacts the foster carer to arrange an initial home visit where their application is discussed in more depth and the assessment process is

explained. This visit also provides the first opportunity to meet the family and assess the suitability of the accommodation.

Applicants who wish to progress their application are then invited to attend a mandatory Skills to Foster course.

No applicant will be considered for panel presentation until this course has been successfully completed. At the end of the course, applicants are advised to take a week to consider whether or not they would still like to become foster carers. Any applicant who subsequently calls to confirm their desire to progress will be appointed a social worker that will begin the formal assessment process.

A fully qualified social worker is appointed to undertake a full assessment. He/she/they visits the applicant(s) at home on about 6-8 occasions for no more than three hours each.

At these visits, the social worker collects information about the applicant(s), all members of the household and any relevant/transferable life experiences and skills they may possess to foster.

The information obtained forms the basis of an assessment report. Children of Colour use the Form F formats published by the Coram British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF).

During the assessment process, applicants are helped to compile a portfolio of written material giving examples of relevant experience and skills as part of their Competencies.

With the consent of the applicant, the following statutory checks are conducted:

- ◆ Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)
- ◆ Medical – own GP, countersigned by our Medical Advisor
- ◆ Three written references (2 x non-related; 1 family member)
- ◆ Significant Ex-Partner (where relevant)
- ◆ Interview of referees
- ◆ Full employment history (covering the past ten years)
- ◆ Proof of Identity

All information about the prospective carer is held on file, and on request, some of this can be viewed in accordance with GDPR and the applicant's written agreement. References from external agencies (Police & Social Services) and personal references, which are provided in confidence, cannot be accessed.

The contents of the Form F assessment report, excluding all references, is shared with the applicant(s) and then presented to Children of Colour Fostering Panel. Applicants are expected to attend the Panel meeting with their assessor. The Panel makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants; the age and number of children.

The assessment process takes anything from 3 to 8 months on average and every effort is made to ensure that there is no avoidable delay.

NMS 14.4 - The fostering panel makes its recommendation on the suitability of a prospective foster carer within eight months of receipt of the prospective foster carer's application to be assessed.

## **Support and Supervision of Foster Carers**

On approval foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker (SSW). The Supervising Social Worker monitors the foster carer's performance and placements, and provides advice, information and support.

The supervising social worker visits once every month, or as required, to support the carer and review and monitor the placement. Where couples foster, the primary carer is seen monthly, but it is expected that the secondary caregiver is present every other month

As well as regular home visits (once a month) and meetings, the SSW undertakes at least one unannounced visit annually and carries out a comprehensive annual review of the foster carer. Our SSW will call the foster carer every week for an update. Each foster carer is reviewed annually or when there is a change in their circumstances. Statutory checks are updated every three years or sooner if required.

Foster carers are provided with a Fostering handbook and are required to sign a foster carer agreement, safer caring and supervision agreement after approval. They have access to the computer system where they will be expected to provide daily logs and regular updates on the children and young people in their care. The system also has all the up-to-date policies and procedures and fostering regulations.

There is a robust training programme for foster carers and it is expected that carers will complete a minimum of 5 training courses & 3 Support Groups per year and undertake identified mandatory training courses. Training sessions are held on a rolling programme at a variety of times to suit all circumstances.

After approval, carers are invited to attend various training as they are scheduled. The training subjects are rolling and will be updated as things change. Some of the subjects included:

### **Mandatory training**

- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene & Nutrition
- Safer Caring
- Life Story work
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Allegations & Complaints
- Promoting contact
- Record Keeping
- Recognising substance abuse
- Valuing diversity
- Attachment & Loss
- LGBTQ+ awareness
- Child exploitation



This list is not exhaustive, and we will have other training subjects depending on carers needs.

Further training includes supporting carers to undertake the TSDS Fostering standards. This must be completed within 12 months of approval.

Foster carers will receive regular allowances to cover the costs of fostering. Foster carers are deemed to be self-employed and expected to have the necessary equipment for their approval age range.

All carers are subject to an Annual Review, of the foster home, that looks at their fostering experience over the previous year including training attended and support provided. Views are sought from the supervising social worker, the foster carer, foster children, birth children, and placing social workers.

The Fostering Panel will consider annual reviews in the first year of approval and every three years subsequently thereafter or more frequently as needed. Following each review the agency decision maker will re-approve the foster carers, or change or terminate the carers' approval.

Subsequent Reviews are conducted by an independent reviewing officer in the carers home and independent support is available to carers through membership of the Fostering Network.

## **Statistical Information**

The Agency gathers a range of statistical data to assist with monitoring and evaluating performance. Figures are constantly changing, so the information in this section constitutes a snapshot at one point in time.

As of October 2023, Children of Colour held the approval for 21 fostering families with a possible 43 placements. On this date, these foster carers were looking after a total of 25 children and young people.

## **Complaints and Allegations**

Wherever possible, complaints are dealt with informally. Where appropriate, in the first instance, any complaint by or against a foster carer will be dealt with on an informal problem-solving basis. There is a written procedure given to all foster carers as part of the Fostering Handbook. The Agency has a complaints procedure that operates if no resolution can be achieved at the problem-solving stage.

Where a complaint against a foster carer constitutes a child protection allegation this is dealt with as a child protection enquiry and is investigated under Child Protection procedures.

The Agency monitors incidents involving verbal threats, aggression or violence. Foster carers are advised to notify their Supervising Social Worker if they experience such an incident. This should also be recorded in the monthly progress reports

The Children's Guide is a handbook given to children and young people, on placement. It contains a section which advises them what to do if they have a complaint.

## **Memberships**

All our approved foster carers are fully subscribed members of FosterTalk who provide independent, impartial advice and support to foster carers across the UK. Their aim is to make a real difference to the lives of foster carers and the children they care for.



Children of Colour Ltd  
102-116 Windmill Road  
Croydon, CR0 2XQ

Tel: 020 8665 4322

E-Mail: [info@childrenofcolour.com](mailto:info@childrenofcolour.com)  
<http://www.childrenofcolourltd.co.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChildrenofColour>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/childrenofcolour/>