



STEP BY STEP FOSTERING LTD STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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**STEP BY STEP
FOSTERING**



Bringing together hearts and homes

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1. Introduction

1.1 Legal framework

National Minimum Standards require that Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) provide a Statement of Purpose.

This Statement of Purpose has been created in accordance with statutory legislation, regulations and guidance which includes:

- Fostering services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: fostering services (2011)
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration) (England) Regulations 2010
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

1.2 Step by Step Fostering Ltd status and constitution

Step by Step Fostering Ltd is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Charity, Step by Step Partnership Ltd (Registered Charity No. 900308).

Step by Step Fostering Ltd is an Independent Fostering Agency registered with Companies House as a private company limited by shares (company number: 13672670).

Its governing instrument is the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

1.3 Vision

Imagine a future where children are at the centre of every family placement. Where unconditional care and support give children the life chances and aspirations that equal and excel their peers. Helping them thrive and create their own future circle of care.





1.4 Mission

Step by Step Fostering place young people at the centre of everything we do. Supporting children by providing supportive foster placements and a safe, welcoming home.

Our mission is to recruit and support exceptional foster carers to create families through matching the needs of the child or young person to the skills, abilities and values of the foster carer, giving children the chance to thrive.

1.5 Values

- Support - children to thrive, feel safe, valued and honoured in their individuality.
- Believe – in honesty, openness and excellence in all we do, keeping children at the heart of our work.
- Seek – strength and potential in children by building courage and resilience.
- Foster – a nurturing environment for children and foster carers. Creating teamwork, successful collaborations, and strong partnerships.
- Listen – always. Taking ownership of our work, words, and actions.

Our values reflect the vision and values of our parent company, Step by Step Partnership Ltd.

1.6 Aims

Step by Step Fostering Ltd is registered as an independent fostering agency, providing supportive foster placements to children aged 0-18 including those with multiple and complex needs within South Central England.

The agency aims to always ensure that:

- We adhere to our values: Support; Believe; Seek; Foster; Listen.
- We recognise the exceptional skills and values that foster carers bring.
- We ensure that foster carers are appropriately recruited, assessed, trained, and fully supported in line with required statutory legislation, regulations, and guidance.
- We remain driven by our values not a profit motive.
- Our staff are compassionate, professional, and inclusive.

The agency always ensures that the agency and its staff operate consistently in accordance with this statement of purpose.

The agency ensures that the statement of purpose is kept under regular review. When revised it will be reviewed by the leadership team and revisions will be notified within 28 days to:

- the Chief Inspector, Ofsted, and
- each foster carer approved by the fostering service provider, and
- to each child placed by the Fostering services (subject to the child's age and understanding)



1.7 Objectives and Outcomes

Ensure children are at the centre of every family placement, protected from abuse and neglect.

- Provide unconditional care and support with supportive foster placements for young people in South Central England
- Promote the child's health, education, employment and future independence by believing the strength and potential in young people.
- Aim for achieving positive outcomes where young people can thrive and create their own future circle of care.
- Recruit, support and recognise skills and value of excellent foster carers and create families that match the needs of the child to the skills, abilities and values of the foster carer giving young people the best life chances possible.
- Ensure foster carers are appropriately recruited, assessed, trained, and fully supported.
- Provide support, regular supervision, and training opportunities to empower foster carers and staff to meet the differing needs of children in our care.
- Ensure young people are provided with placement stability and have the opportunity to create secure attachments.
- Promote and maintain contact between young people and their birth families and/or significant others whilst communicating effectively with parents.
- Promoting positive working relationships and partnerships with other services and local authorities and facilitate communication and good practice for the benefit of the young people.
- Ensure the Fostering Panel is conducted according to the required legislation and regulations in relation to carer approvals, reviews, allegations and complaints.
- Be transparent in our work - listen to feedback, explain decisions, be compassionate, professional and inclusive. We will take into account the views of young people, foster carers and staff.
- Ensure continuous improvement and development of fostering services.

1.8 Statement of Purpose EndNote

A copy of this Statement of purpose is provided to the Chief Inspector, Ofsted. It will be publicly available via our website www.stepbystep.org.uk. Copies will be available upon request to:

- Any person working for the purposes of the fostering services,
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer of the fostering service,
- Any child placed with a foster carer by the fostering service, and
- The parent of any such child

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and at least annually.

2. Safeguarding statement

Our support staff, administration staff, the Board and volunteers share a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at risk. Step by Step Fostering maintain a culture that values and upholds their right to safety and respect, ensuring risk is managed to minimise the circumstances where a child accessing support may suffer harm. This is achieved by upholding human rights, ensuring proportionate, timely, professional and ethical responses are made.

Step by Step Fostering works in accordance with the organisations Safeguarding Policy and related procedures and jointly with other organisations to ensure that children are effectively safeguarded and protected.

3. Equality and diversity

We are committed to the principles of equal opportunity in employment and services. Discriminatory behaviour of any sort will be challenged and managed appropriately.

Our provision to Local Authorities, foster carers and looked after children aims to reflect this culture of diversity, ensuring that our services, recruitment and general business do not discriminate on any grounds of:

- Race
- Sex/Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Religion and belief (or non-belief)
- Pregnancy and maternity

4. Service registration details

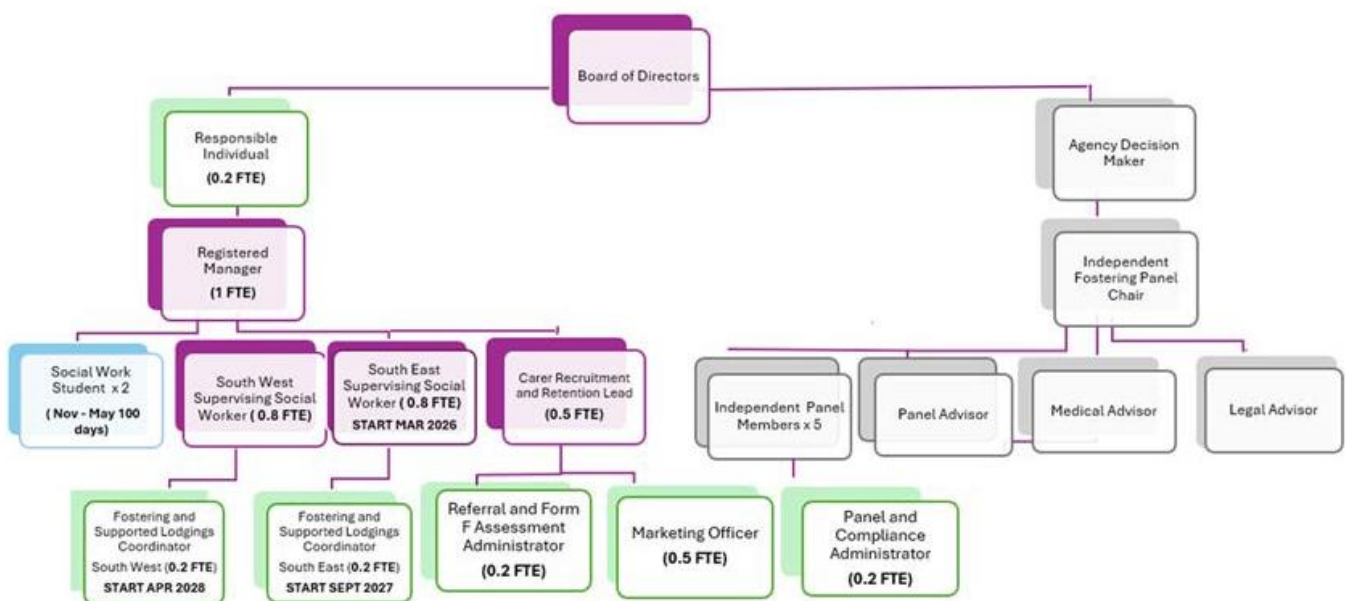
Ofsted Registration No. 2721151 12th September 2023.

5. Service Staff Structure

5.1 Summary of current staffing

- Board of Directors
- Responsible Individual / DSL: Kelly Headen
- Registered Manager: Sarah Faulkner
- Additional support from Step by Step Ltd including Finance, HR and Marketing

5.2 Organisation Chart



5.3 management

The Directors and Management team comprises of professionals from a range of backgrounds and disciplines along with sector professionals with considerable experience of managing businesses and supporting vulnerable children and young people.

Andrew Mitchell	Chair and Director	With his background as a lawyer, both in private practice and the financial services sector, Andrew brings extensive legal experience to his role. He helps ensure that Step by Step Fostering operates on a legally sound basis. He is particularly expert in local authority contracts which proves extremely useful when negotiating complex agreements.
Dr Becky Ward	Director	Becky has worked across the third sector for over 30 years in a wide range of roles supporting young people, including as a safeguarding officer, programme lead, and researcher. She is a research consultant and Research Director at a homelessness research centre. Her work has consistently focused on elevating the voices of children and young people, particularly those who are unheard or underrepresented.
James Mowat	Director	James is in the unique position as a lived experienced director, having once been supported by Step by Step charity himself. James has achieved great success in his life, despite the considerable adversity he faced, and is now Associate Director of a global recruitment company.
Matthew Reeves	Director	Matthew is a retired Chief Inspector with Hampshire Constabulary, serving mostly in the north of Hampshire. He has worked in a variety of roles, but his heart lies in neighbourhood policing and building partnerships. Matt is passionate about working collaboratively with other organisations to make communities safer and improve the lives of residents. In recent years he has been involved in tackling serious violence, particularly involving young people, and was instrumental in establishing Violence Reduction Units in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Caroline Skerry	Director	Caroline is a co-founder of a successful communications agency; Caroline is a 15-year veteran of the marketing and public relations sector. She has extensive experience in a wide range of media, including TV, radio and digital, and has created marketing campaigns for an array of domestic and international enterprises. As well as an enviable skill set, Caroline brings to the role energy, determination and a belief that teamwork is everything.
Sir Jonathan Portal	Director	Jonathan brings to the role his skills as a qualified accountant and his wide array of contacts in councils and housing associations. He has experience in helping small businesses run their finances and this has proved highly useful for Step by Step Fostering.
Lucy Barnes	Company Secretary and Director	Lucy background is in corporate law, and the more specific area of company secretary, means she brings impressive legal and organisational skills to her role. Lucy has previously been on a number of school and church boards and held a position of safeguarding officer. Step by Step is based not far from where Lucy grew up, and she has encountered first-hand the challenges young people face through her volunteering roles.
Kelly Headen	Head of Fostering and Supported Lodgings. Responsible Individual	Kelly leads our Fostering and Supported Lodgings services across six counties in the South of England. As an innovative leader, Kelly encourages change and continually strives to develop, shape and strengthen services to deliver the very best for children and young people. Kelly has had an extensive 26-year career within the housing, support, care and mental health sector. She draws upon her invaluable knowledge and expertise to drive forward our mission and vision as an integral part of the Leadership Team. She is also a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Ofsted Responsible Individual. Outside of Step by Step, Kelly is a school Safeguarding Co-opted Governor and Girl Guiding leader for her local community.
Sarah Faulkner	Registered Manager	Sarah is a registered social worker with Social Work England, SW101476 and brings to the role a passion and advocacy to offer children the highest quality of care. Sarah has previously worked with Barnardo's and with Local Authority Children's Services. She has extensive experience of Family Resilience and Family Safeguarding models, strengths-based approaches, motivational interviewing and solution focus brief therapy. She can support therapeutic parenting having facilitated parenting programs supporting parents with children with Autism, ADHD and challenging behaviours.

5.4 Social workers and Fostering Support Workers

All social workers are professionally qualified and registered with Social Work England, along with post qualifying specialist awards and experience related to working with children in foster care.

Fostering support workers will be qualified to a minimum level 3 childcare qualification along with relevant experience for working with children in foster care.

5.5 Supervision, Training and Development of Staff

Step by Step Fostering is committed to providing all staff with the support, training and supervision required to carry out the responsibilities of their job and to develop their talents to support the organisations strategic objectives. We aim to provide a working environment where continuous learning and development can take place to help staff to gain more enjoyment from their roles, increase motivation and enhance staff retention.

New members of staff have a detailed induction plan agreed with their line manager that addresses their needs, informs them of all necessary information and equips them with the tools to carry out their new role.

All full-time social workers have a monthly, structured supervision session from their line manager. This will be formally recorded. Staff who work directly with young people will also be expected to access peer support through reflective practice sessions and team meetings and will be supported through the insight and expertise of their colleagues concerning challenging young person issues.

There will be an annual performance and development review to agree a detailed individual work plan to focus their work, plan for occupational development and meet learning needs.

5.6 Safer recruitment

Safer recruitment and right to work checks and enquiries are carried out on all staff to ensure that the welfare of children are safeguarded. For all staff, verification of any necessary formal qualification is obtained.

6. Services provided

6.1 Services

Step by Step Fostering provide supportive foster placements to children aged 0-18, and their siblings, within South Central England. We offer placements to children in need, including those who may have multiple and complex needs.



We provide the following placements:

Timeframe of Fostering Placements

Short-term

Less than 24 months, not secured by a permanence order.

Long-term

More than 24 months, not secured by a permanence order.

Permanent

Secured by a permanence order.

Types of Fostering placements

Standard (Including Separated Children)

A low to medium need supported placement. The Foster Carer receives a standard core payment and provides ongoing parental support.

Solo

A medium to high need supported placement. When a child is required to be placed on their own. Provided with constant supervision and support by carer on a 1-1 basis. Foster Carer paid higher payment over and above the standard core payment.

Parent and Child

The carer provides support to guide the parent in developing their parenting skills. It is likely that in this type of placement the carers take a more active role in the care of the child. There is a higher payment above the standard core payment.

Disabilities or Complex Needs

A complex need placement for a CYP with usually enduring health care needs. Additional, specialist and sustained needs and demands, including at night-time. There is a higher payment over the standard core payment – not on our current offer.

Sibling

This is a placement for siblings where a Foster Carer can support them together within the same household. They would receive a standard core payment for each child and provide ongoing parental support.

6.2 Additional Services

We source additional services from Step by Step's Early intervention and prevention services (EIPS).

These services include:

- Step by Step Launch service which offers advice for children on housing options, rent deposits, benefits advice, sexual health advice and guidance, and health and well-being.

- **Non-Clinical Counselling:** Trained and experienced counsellors who listen to children and support them to make positive decisions for themselves, through solution-focused therapy. Step by Step's counsellors are BACP registered and a minimum of Level 4 qualified in counselling or clinical psychotherapy. The counsellors are trained to listen to the children without judgement and provide support to make positive decisions and develop strategies for managing their issues. Anxiety and depression are the most common conditions among the children attending Step by Steps counselling and they also help children deal with issues such as bereavement, low self-esteem, loneliness, relationships, eating disorders and self-harm.
- In addition the following services are available when required:
 - Therapeutic life story work
 - Cognitive behaviour therapy
 - Fostering support worker
 - Interpreting and translation
 - Drug and alcohol recovery support

7. Recruitment, Assessment and approval

Our route of recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers:

1. Initial enquiry via telephone, website or other routes.
2. Telephone screening to determine initial suitability.
3. Allocated for initial visit.
4. Initial visit carried out and recommendation made by Step by Step Fostering Limited whether to proceed or not. The enquirer may decide at this stage that they do not wish to proceed.
5. If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant(s) are informed verbally; this is followed up in writing.
6. If the decision is to proceed, then the initial checks will be made.
7. Following positive DBS checks the applicant(s) will attend SbSF's Skills to Foster preparation course.
8. If applicant(s) decide to proceed to the Form F assessment, then the case is allocated to a Form F Assessor.
9. All references and any further checks are undertaken.
10. A series of meetings are undertaken between the applicant and the Assessor.
11. Upon completion of Form F assessment and all checks and references, the assessing social worker meets with the fostering panel for recommendation. Applicant(s) are invited to attend the panel.
12. The Agency Decision Maker decides on whether to approve the applicant(s) as foster carers. Applicant(s) are informed of the outcome in writing.

8. Support, training and reviewing carers

8.1 Support for Foster Carers

The fostering team are available during the week and foster carers have 24 hour support provided from the local authority's duty and out of hours services. Foster carers have an allocated Supervising Social worker and access to the agency's registered manager. The fostering team provide training and support groups for carers.

8.2 Training for Foster Carers

The fostering team will provide relevant training for Foster Carers, through a combination of in-house and externally sourced training. Additional support and specialist training is available through The Training Hub, Coram BAAF and the Fostering Network.

8.3 Supervision and Support

Foster Carers are allocated a supervising social worker whose role will be to supervise and support the household. Foster carers receive monthly supervision visits for support. An unannounced visit will be carried out at least once per year. Carers will be required to maintain written records about each child on our Intuitive Care case management system (CMS) placed and these will be discussed during supervisory visits.

Supervising social workers attend placement planning meetings, pre-disruption and disruption meetings and child in care views wherever possible. During core working hours, carers can contact their supervising social worker for advice, information and support whenever necessary. If the supervising social worker is unavailable the manager will respond to urgent requests. Out of hours, support to Foster Carers is provided via the local authority out-of-hours team.

In addition to the Supervising Social Workers, the Foster Carers will, once the service has grown, have access to the Fostering Support Workers. They will have specialist knowledge of supporting children with multiple and complex needs.

8.4 Financial Support

We value the significant contribution that foster carers make to the care, development and well-being of children in placement. We will support them financially with a fostering allowance alongside assisting the foster carers with any discretionary additional costs that may arise. We will ensure our carers have written guidance on what allowances cover and what additional expenses can be claimed.

8.5 Review of Foster Carers

Our foster carers have an annual review. If there is a major change in their circumstances or they are subject to a complaint or allegation reviews will be more frequent.

Step by Step Fostering will ensure that the process is as interactive and inclusive as possible for all foster carers and their families. We will record this directly onto our Intuitive Care CMS which will ensure that everything is held in a secure and GDPR compliant manner.

The review will enable us to record:

- significant events
- changes within the household
- the number of placements
- any specific issue with placement
- standard of care, ability and knowledge of carers
- provision of a safe, caring environment
- working as a team.

The report will be presented to the fostering panel and Agency Decision Maker for recommendations regarding re-approval, de-registration or change of registration as required.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

8.5 Review of Foster Carers

Step by Step Fostering will ensure that the service is regularly monitored and evaluated. We will do this using:

- Annual reviews of foster carers
- Childrens feedback forms
- Annual staff appraisals
- Regular supervision of carer(s)
- Regular supervision of staff
- Feedback from carers
- Annual service satisfaction questionnaire
- Feedback from other professionals
- Feedback from LAC reviews
- File audits
- Quarterly performance reviews
- External monitoring via regulatory bodies such as Ofsted

10. Complaints, Allegations and whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of a concern in the public interest that something is happening within Step by Step Fostering that should not be, or not happening that should be. Step by Step Fostering's policy is based on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). We are committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability, so practice and concerns can be raised via the whistleblowing process. Details of the Whistleblowing Policy will be placed on our website.

The aim of the Step by Step Fostering complaints process is to resolve a complaint at the most informal level possible. Complaints can be made in writing or orally to any member of staff. Details of the complaint's procedure will be found in the foster carer's handbook or on the Step by Step Fostering website.

11. Registered Office information

Step by Step Fostering Ltd, 36 Crimea Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 1UD

Company No. 13672670

Step by Step Fostering Ltd will be registered and inspected as an Independent Fostering Agency with Ofsted.

Responsible Individual: Kelly Headen

Registered Manager: Sarah Faulkner