



STEP BY STEP FOSTERING LTD STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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Approval: Leadership Team

Author: Sarah Luke

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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 young people are at the centre of every family placement. Where unconditional care and support give young people 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 young people with complex needs at the bleakest of times 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 young people the chance to thrive.

1.5 Values

- **Support** - young people and ensure they are at the centre of our work regardless of their circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, behaviour, religion and beliefs.
- **Believe** – in honesty, openness and excellence in all we do.
- **Seek** – strength and potential in young people to support them to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Foster** - excellence for young people and foster carers
- **Listen** - always.

Our values reflect the vision and values of our parent company, Step by Step Partnership Ltd: “Young People, Hard times, Bright Futures”.

1.6 Aims

Step by Step Fostering Ltd is registered as an independent fostering agency, providing supportive foster placements to children and young people aged 0-18, with a focus on 11-18 year olds 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 truly 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 Board of Directors 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 young people 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 exceptional foster carers and create families that match the needs of the young person 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 complex 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 End Note

A copy of this Statement of purpose is provided to the Chief Inspector, Ofsted. It will be publicly available via our website www.stepbystepfostering.co.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 young people 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 young person 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 young people 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 dealt with appropriately.

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

- Race
- Colour
- Ethnic or national origin
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Appearance
- Age
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Religion and belief (or non-belief)
- Pregnancy and maternity

4 SERVICE REGISTRATION DETAILS

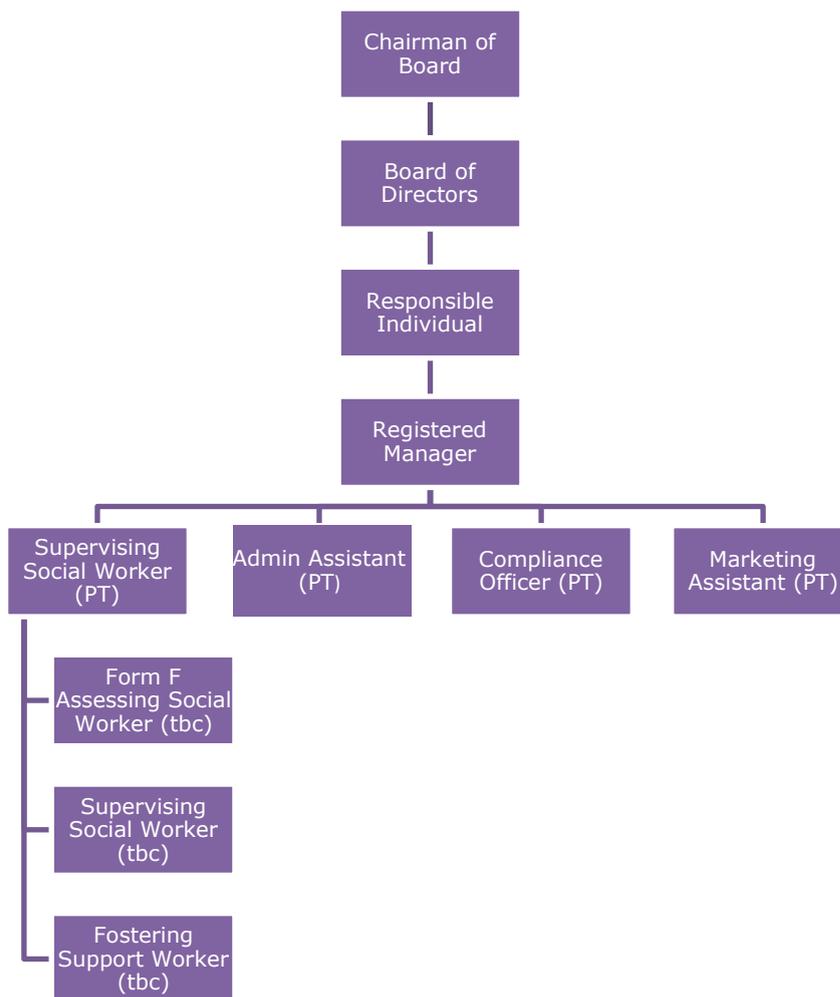
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5 SERVICE STAFF STRUCTURE

5.1 Summary of current staffing

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

5.2 Organisation Chart



5.3 Management

The proposed Directors and Management team will comprise professionals from a range of backgrounds and disciplines along with sector professionals with considerable experience of managing businesses and supporting young people.

Andrew Mitchell	Chair	Andrew has a background as a lawyer, both in private practice and the financial sector. As Chair of Step by Step Fostering, he brings extensive legal experience to his role. Andrew is also a Trustee of Step by Step and, along with James, forms the link between the two organisations at Board level.
Debbie Moreton	Director	Debbie is the Chief Executive of Step by Step as well as a Director of Step by Step Fostering Ltd. Debbie joined Step by Step in 2007 and initially worked in the Supported Lodgings service before progressing to the Head of Young People's Services and then CEO in July 2020. Debbie was also a foster carer for many years looking after teenagers and equipping them with the skills they needed to gain independence. Step by Step Fostering is her vision.
James Mowat	Director	James is a Trustee of Step by Step as well as a Director of Step by Step Fostering Ltd. He is in the unique position as a director as having once been supported by Step by Step 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 Reeves is a Chief Inspector with Hampshire Constabulary. He has been a police officer since 1997, 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.
Nichola Goom	Director	Nichola Goom is a highly experienced leader with over 20 years of expertise in the housing, care, and support sectors, focused on supporting vulnerable individuals. She is Head of Income Generation at Step by Step, leading strategic efforts to secure funding and partnerships for services that support young people at risk of homelessness. Nichola is also the founder of HiCarer, an innovative platform designed to transform the way care is accessed and delivered, further reflecting her passion for creating impactful solutions. Currently serving as Vice-Chair of the KFC Youth Foundation, she continues to be deeply committed to youth development and empowerment. Throughout her career, Nichola has worked with a broad range of vulnerable groups, including both adults and young people, developing and managing services that provide housing, care, and personal support.

Kelly Headen	Head of Fostering and Supported Lodgings. Responsible Individual	<p>Kelly Headen is the Head of Fostering and Supported Lodgings and member of the Leadership Team at Step by Step. She has been responsible for the delivery of key services for Looked After Children and Young People over the past 12 years and has extensive experience working to develop, shape and implement new services across multiple counties.</p> <p>Before joining SbS Kelly had 10 years' experience working in adult mental health and homelessness and under CQC registered provisions. Kelly was also Director of the Surrey Wellbeing Partnership which support Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children, Young People, and families across Surrey. She also has personal experience of fostering to adopt within her extended family.</p>
Sarah Luke	Registered Manager	<p>Sarah joined in October 2021. She is a registered social worker with Social Work England, SW101476. Her qualifications are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc (Hons) Social Work degree from Winchester University. • Qualified practice educator - Practice Education Professional Standards Stages (PEPS) 1 and 2 at master's level. <p>Sarah has previously been employed with Step by Step Partnership, Barnardo's and Surrey Children's Services. She has 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.</p>
Paula Lush	Administrator	<p>Paula joined SbS 10 years ago. Originally in our Tenancy Support service then moved to the Supported Lodgings and Fostering services. Responsible for host annual reviews and auditing housing related paperwork for each placement to ensure compliance. Monitors DBS checking process in the service, ensures all carers, hosts and family members have an active Enhanced DBS certificate for their role, managing all DBS renewals ahead of expiry dates and initiating DBS risk assessments for any certificates that may contain information. She is a representative for Supported Lodgings on the SbS Health and Safety committee and oversees the Health and Safety processes in the service and implementation of policies and procedures.</p> <p>Previous roles for Paula include District Advice Service Manager at Hart District Citizens Advice Bureau for 3 years. Homelessness Officer for both Hart and Rushmoor Councils for 17 years, completing homelessness investigations for families and individuals presenting as homeless to assess priority need and source housing options. She was also an accommodation support worker with UB40 and a qualified youth worker and club leader.</p>

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 and young people in foster care.

Fostering support workers will be qualified to a minimum level 3 childcare qualification along with relevant experience for working with children and young people 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 and young people 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 young people aged 11-18, and their siblings, within South Central England. We offer placements to young people 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 UASC)

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 young person 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 young people 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 young people 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 young people 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 young people attending Step by Steps counselling and they also help young people 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:
 - Cognitive behaviour therapy
 - Supervised contact
 - Fostering support worker
 - Interpreting and translation
 - Drug and alcohol recovery support
 - Parenting assessment
 - Art therapy
 - Play therapy
 - External education support

7 RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL FOR FOSTER CARERS

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 and young people 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

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 Luke