

Supported Fostering Services Wales Statement of Purpose



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**About the provider...who we are ...
our status and constitution:**

The name of our service (the registered service provider)	The Supported Fostering Services Charitable Trust (SFS)
Registered charity number	1087447
The address of our service	4 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3AS
Our registered address	12 Conqueror Court, Sittingbourne, ME10 5BH
Our telephone number	029 2046 0004
Our email address	cardiff@fostering.com
Our website	www.fostering.com
Our Chief Executive and Responsible Individual	Andrew Stirk
The Service Manager manages the service day to day	Gaynor Cleverly

Our legal entity:

Supported Fostering Services was first registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate as a fostering provider in 2005. We are a registered fostering charity regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) . Our inspection reports are available on the Care Inspectorate Wales website.

As a charity we have a board of trustees who oversee the organisation's work.

Purpose

We work in partnership with foster carers and local authorities to enable children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential within a stable, caring family environment.

As a charity all our resources are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children.

Description of the location of our service

Our office is located in central Cardiff. We recruit, train and support a range of foster carers located in South Wales who provide high quality foster care for children.

Range of needs of the individuals for whom our service is provided

Age range of people using the service:	We provide foster care for children age range 0-18 years old We also provide child and parent placements (there is no age limit for the parent)
Gender of people using the service:	Male and female
Number of people using the service:	Variable depending on the availability of our approved foster carers and robust matching of children to be placed with our carers.
<p>The types of placement that we offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Short term – task centered placements to offer children security during the development of their care and support plan; •Emergency and respite – our 24 service allows us to place a child at any time of the day or night; •Long term placements – permanent care; •Independence and after care – we ease the transition for young people into independent living and also offer outreach support. Several young people in placement with SFS have remained living with their carers, under different arrangements, post 18; •Sibling groups – we ensure that sibling relationships are maintained when this is part of their care and support plan, whether this is best served by them living together, or in neighboring foster homes; •Child and parent – assessment and development of parenting skills around a structured programme; •Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children – children who have arrived in the UK without their parents, who need the safety of a stable family environment; •Children with a disability – we have a number of carers who have relevant skills and qualifications to meet the specific needs of children with a disability or children with autism. 	

How our service is provided

At SFS in Wales we

- place children and foster parents at the centre of our service;
- have a proactive commitment to equal opportunities and diversity;
- act in an open and honest way with children in placement, the parents of any such child, foster carers and prospective foster carers, local authorities and other professionals;
- work in partnership with local authorities and foster carers to enable children and young people in our care to grow, develop and achieve their full potential within a stable, caring family environment.

Our foster carer recruitment, assessment and review process:

- The core of our service is the provision of a range of foster placements with experienced, trained carers skilled in working with children and young people who have had difficult early life experiences. A rigorous assessment of potential foster carers is essential to the success of our service.
- We run several recruitment drives throughout the year but can also be approached directly at any time by anyone who is interested in becoming a foster carer;
- Prospective carers attend an initial three-day 'Skills to Foster' training course based on the Fostering Network and CoramBAAF material, which covers all aspects of the fostering task and includes input from existing SFS carers. This is an intensive period of preparation, assessment and reflection;
- Our assessments are undertaken by qualified and experienced SFS social workers. We ensure that prospective carers and their assessing social worker have the time and space to complete their work together. We use the nationally recognised Coram BAAF assessment format;
- Thorough checks are undertaken to confirm the suitability of the applicants: this includes a medical check and references;
- The assessment is presented to our Panel, which is made up of people with experience and expertise in child care and includes representatives from the health, education and social work professions as well as a foster carer from outside SFS. At least one member will also have been in care themselves. SFS social work staff and the Service Manager are also present. Together they will consider the application and recommend whether they think the applicants should be approved as foster carers. Prospective carers attend the meeting and can contribute to the discussion. The Panel's recommendation is passed to the fostering provider who makes the final approval decision;
- The performance and abilities of our approved carers are reviewed every year, as required by 'The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018'. The supervising social worker meets with the foster family

and compiles a report that covers the carers' competencies. The views of all relevant parties including children in placement, birth children and the placing local authority are sought to inform this review;

- The SFS Panel will consider all the information, review the approval criteria and add any other recommendations. The fostering provider will make the final decision if the carers are considered suitable to continue fostering for SFS;
- If a foster carer is unhappy with the decision not to approve them as foster carers or to terminate their approval, they have a right to appeal to SFS or to an independent Panel. Further information can be provided on request.

Referrals, matching and placements

- Most of our referrals for a placement come through the 'Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru' online database (known as the 4Cs). Local authorities securely post information about a child's placement requirements inviting fostering providers to respond with potential placement matches;
- We carefully consider all referrals for placement and will only match/place a child with a foster carer if we are confident that the carer has the skills and expertise to meet that child's individual needs;
- The skills and expertise of our foster carers enable us to offer a range of placement types right across the age range from babies to teenagers;
- Placements in foster care are mostly made on the same day that a referral is received. All our carers have produced a booklet which provides information and photos about their home, family, pets, community etc. and this is used to help the child to settle in.

Services for children in placement

- The local authority has responsibility for assessing the child's needs and developing a care and support plan and a placement plan in consultation with the child/young person and other key people in the child's life. These plans will specify what each child needs from the foster placement;
- We support and enable children and their foster carers to meet the child's individual needs and achieve the child's well-being outcomes, as set out in their care and support plan / placement plan. Appendix 1 of this document provides more detail of how we can support children in different areas of their life, such as their:
 - physical, mental and emotional health and development;
 - safety
 - social and behavioural development;
 - culture, sexuality, religion and language;
 - education and recreation;

- independence and economic well-being;
- right to participate in decisions that affect their everyday life
- contact arrangements with their birth family etc.
- We ensure every foster carer has a safe care policy which meets the needs of each child placed with them and we work with children to help them understand how to protect themselves from significant harm, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, deprivation, discrimination and accident;
- We provide packages of care tailored individually to the child's needs, which is supported on a consultancy basis by accredited specialists to provide any therapeutic approach that the child requires; this includes therapeutic life story work. There is no extra cost for these services;
- We ensure that the child's voice is heard: our social work staff know all the children in placement and ensure that time is given to them during home visits to allow them to express their wishes and feelings. We also facilitate more formal consultation events/activities throughout the year;
- We monitor compliance with the child's care and support plan / placement plan at our monthly visits to the foster carers. The Local Authority will also hold six-monthly review meetings chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure the placement continues to meet the child's needs and to make any changes to the care and support plan as the child grows and develops. Our foster carers and social work staff will contribute to these meetings. We support every child to participate in meetings and decisions that affect them.

Services for our foster carers

Foster carers deserve the best possible support. At SFS we provide our carers with:

- Advice and support 24/7, 365 days a year, from our team of qualified and experienced social workers and administrative support;
- Written information and guidance in the form of a Foster Carer Handbook and our Policies and Procedures for Foster Carers;
- Minimum Monthly visits to the foster carer's home from their qualified supervising social worker. (Each worker supports no more than 10-12 families allowing social workers to have the space and time to provide a high-quality support service);
- Therapeutic support – consultation from qualified therapists is available to carers if, for example, they are dealing with a child's behaviour that is particularly tricky. Monthly consultations for carers, facilitated by a psychotherapist are provided as and when needed, to provide specialist advice, support and strategies to help carers deal with children and young people's complex emotions;
- An ongoing training programme; every carer has a Personal Development Plan;
- Allowances and expenses;
- Respite – SFS offers carers up to 21 nights paid respite when this is considered in the best interests of the child as reflected in their care and support plan;

- Social Events – various social events are organised throughout the year, in conjunction with the carers;
- ‘Foster Talk’ membership – all SFS carers are members of ‘Foster Talk’, paid for by the agency. This provides a variety of benefits including independent advice and a 24-hour legal helpline.

Our services for local authorities

SFS provides services of the highest quality:

- a range of placements with experienced, trained carers;
- a full range of social work and therapeutic services;
- a package of care tailored to the needs of each individual child as set out in their care and support plan / placement plan;
- our inclusive fee ensures that not only that each child receives the services they need – there are also no ‘hidden extras’;
- 24-hour availability;
- Contact facilities.

We have a proven track record of working in partnership with local authorities.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss what SFS can do for you.

Our premises:

We provide premises located in central Cardiff which are accessible to all our carers and children in placement, including rooms for a variety of purposes including therapy, contact, educational tuition, and meetings.

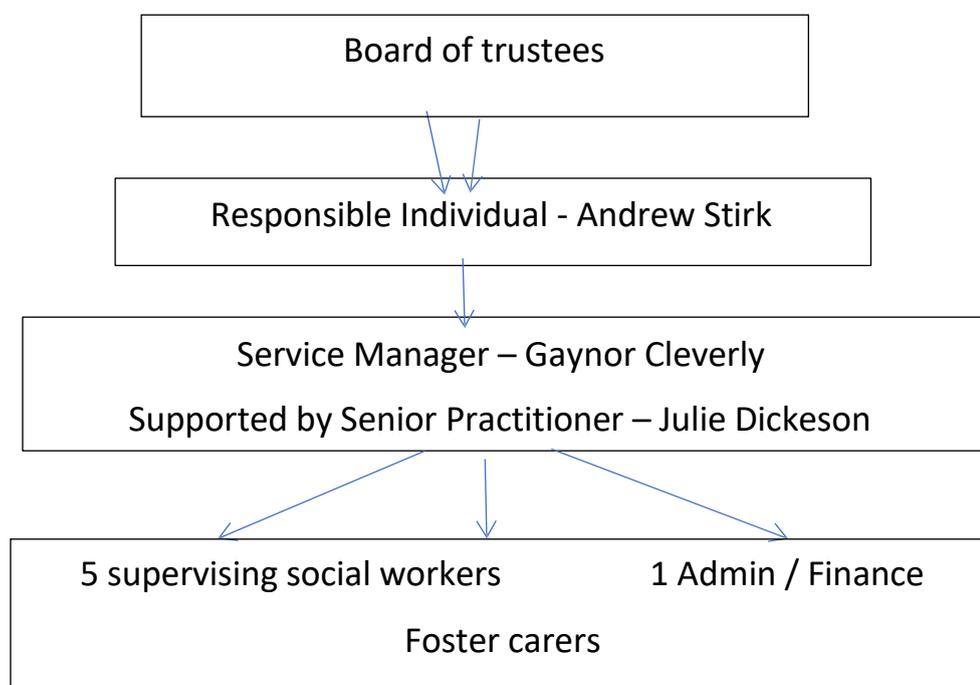
Providing services in the Welsh language:

- We recognise our duty to provide a service in the Welsh language. We undertake to answer in Welsh any enquiries received in Welsh, provide Welsh translations of all key documents, policies and procedures. Currently we do not have a fluent Welsh speaker in our team, but we can access the expertise of a Welsh speaking qualified fostering social worker should this be required.

Our organisational structure and staffing arrangements

The management structure is geared to achieving our organisational aims with the professional staff supporting carers to enable them to give children the best possible service.

Management structure –



The management team –

The Board of Trustees – have responsibility for the broad strategy and oversee management effectiveness in achieving the aims and objectives of our fostering agency.

The Responsible Individual - as Chief Executive has responsibility for supervising the business and financial aspects of the agency. The RI is ultimately responsible for the quality of the work undertaken by the organisation.

The Service Manager – has responsibility for the day to day delivery of services to children and carers and to manage the SFS staff team. She is supported in this by one Senior Practitioner, who will provide management cover when the Service Manager is absent.

Staff - the senior practitioner and the five supervising social workers have responsibility for the day to day support and supervision of placements within a protected caseload of no more than 10 – 12 foster families;

SFS only employ fully qualified childcare practitioners with previous experience in the public sector, dedicated to providing a child-centered service. Their core duties are offering support, advice and guidance to foster carers and undertaking assessments of prospective carers. In addition, they are expected to use and develop a range of skills such as communicating with their local authority counterparts, direct work with carers and children and offering training workshops to carers.

Administrative staff provide an invaluable range of secretarial, financial and IT support.

Other people who work for or with SFS –

- Panel members – we maintain a central list of people who are suitable to be members of our fostering panel;
- A part-time independent qualified social work consultant to monitor and review our practice;
- A variety of external trainers to provide a range of training for our carers and staff;
- A range of qualified therapists to support our work with carers and children in placement.

Staffing levels: the organisation of the staff rota ensures that a qualified social worker is available to take calls and provide support to our foster carers 24/7.

Staff supervision: all social work staff are supervised monthly by the Service Manager and every staff member has an annual appraisal.

Staff training: all social workers are registered with Social Care Wales. They are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours training a year per person. We enable our staff to attend a range of professional training to meet their needs as identified in supervision and their annual appraisal. This includes attending the training we put on for our foster carers. Administrative staff also complete training relevant to their job descriptions.

The numbers and qualifications of our staff:

Qualifications and experience of the staff team:			
Responsible Individual	Business Degree	25 years working in social care Family Magistrate	Has been the RI for SFS in Wales since its registration in 2005
Service Manager	Dip(SW) NVQ Level 4 in Management	23 years as a practicing child care social worker	Manager of SFS Wales since 2005
Our Senior Practitioner and the five Supervising Social Workers all have a Social Work Qualification and are registered as social workers with Social Care Wales.			
Our Administrator has a law degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in legal practice.			

Secure storage of records

All records are held in a secure database with restricted access.

Governance and quality monitoring arrangements

We are committed to continual improvement and development to meet our objectives. The needs and wishes of the child are at the heart of all our work.

SFS will monitor and maintain the highest quality threshold in accordance with 'The Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019', 'The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018' and the Statutory Guidance and Code of Practice for Fostering Services in Wales 2019.

The Responsible Individual will take a lead role in monitoring the quality of our service, maintaining oversight of the management, quality, safety and effectiveness of the service. He is supported in achieving this by the Service Manager and a part-time independent consultant. This work will include:

- The Responsible Individual maintaining regular contact with the Service Manager by phone and email;
- the Responsible Individual visiting the SFS premises at least every three months and meeting with members of staff, children who are in placement and their foster carers;
- regular consultation with children in placement, our foster carers and their family, local authority social workers, birth family members, our staff etc. This is achieved through regular contact with every child and their foster carers, foster carer support groups, staff meetings and supervision, foster carer annual reviews, LAC Reviews, consultation events and questionnaires etc.;
- ensure policies and procedures are up to date and complied with;
- our quarterly Quality of Care Review to monitor and evidence key performance indicators and provide evidence on the adequacy of resources available to continue to provide the service, a report of which is submitted to our Board of Trustees;
- a six-monthly report which will include an assessment of the standard of care and the support provided and any recommendations for the improvement of the service, a copy of which can be made available to our key stakeholders and Care Inspectorate Wales on request;
- maintain effective systems to record incidents, complaints, reportable notifications and other records prescribed by 'The Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019' and identify patterns and trends and any areas for improving our practice in these areas;
- complete an annual return for Care Inspectorate Wales.

Arrangements for dealing with complaints

SFS has a clear and accessible complaints procedure, which is available on request.

Complaints should be received within six months of the incidents to which they refer. Complaints after this time will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Responsible Individual/Chief Executive of SFS.

SFS can provide someone to help you with your complaint if you wish.

Stage 1: We hope that you can resolve any concerns informally by talking with our staff team.

Stage 2: contact the Service Manager.

Stage 3: If your complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Manager you should refer your complaint to the Responsible Individual. The Responsible Individual may involve a member of the Trustee Board, who is independent of the day to day management of SFS.

The Responsible Individual maintains a record of any complaints, how they were investigated and their outcome. This file is audited every three months to monitor the quality of the complaints procedure and to gain any learning for the agency.

If you wish to make a complaint, please ask staff for a copy of our full complaint's procedure, which includes more detail about how to complain and what you can expect from SFS in response to your complaint (including timescales.)

Appendix 1 – Examples of how we can meet the specific needs of children in placement

Educational support –The promotion of educational attainment for children and young people in care is one of our core aims. SFS will provide the following support:

- support children to remain in the same school, where this remains in their best interest e.g. carers will provide transport to and from school if necessary;
- If the child has to change schools, we will work in partnership with the placing local authority to identify appropriate schools and secure a place;
- work in close liaison with schools to try and prevent any exclusions arising from a child's behavioural needs;
- We have commissioned a psychotherapist and play therapist to work with schools when managing a child's behaviour has been a challenge for them, to keep the child in school;
- Where needed, we will help to secure a statement of special educational needs so that young people who need specialist schools or specialist support can access it;
- We will arrange and pay for additional tuition if this is required;
- Our carers maintain close contact with their child in placement's school and will attend parent's evenings, special events held at the school, school plays etc.;
- Our foster carers will ensure that children have the necessary school uniform and equipment. They will create an environment in the household that encourages learning and support children to complete their homework;
- 'Reach for the Stars' is our reward programme that recognises achievement at the child's level. We also provide financial rewards for young people who sit exams at GCSE and A level.

Supporting children with their leisure time - SFS carers excel in their ability to motivate and support children and young people in their care to develop new interests and hobbies, join clubs etc. as well as continuing with existing interests. Many of our children in placement have been able to enjoy holidays for the first time in their lives.

Promoting good health and well-being - SFS strive to promote the highest standards of physical, mental and emotional health and well-being for children and young people. Many children and young people come to SFS from a background where their health, protection and nutrition have not been a priority. We aim not only to improve health outcomes but also to enable children and young people to make their own best possible decisions about maintaining a healthy lifestyle as they grow and develop. Our goal is a healthy childhood and a healthy adult.

Therapeutic services play an integral role in our services to children and young people. Following an assessment of need, we are able, in agreement with the placing local authority, to commission services from a range of fully accredited specialists to provide a therapeutic approach that the child requires. This includes play therapy, therapeutic life story work, psychotherapy and Theraplay. Many of these specialists are in the same building as SFS.

Contact – where contact is in the best interests of the child, it is important that it takes place in a warm, safe setting where the child and parent, birth family and other significant people can make the most of their time together;
We expect that the social worker, the birth family and SFS sign up to a contact agreement that sets out all the arrangements and expectations;
In our office we have welcoming, comfortable rooms with toys and play equipment.
Parents can expect to be welcomed in a non-judgmental environment;
Supervision of contact and reports can be provided by SFS;
Where appropriate, contact can take place in the carer's home, if this is safe for all household members and the best place for the child;
Transport for children to and from contact sessions can be provided by SFS.

Helping children to maintain their linguistic, cultural and/or religious identities

- we have experience of providing care for children and young people from a range of cultures / religions and languages. Our support has included-

- use of interpreters and translation Apps;
- providing opportunities to learn English;
- enabling children to attend their chosen place of worship;
- making links with relevant community groups, if appropriate;
- celebrating different cultural religious festivals and providing a festival allowance in addition to Birthdays and Christmas allowances;
- purchase of specialist equipment such as prayer mats and prayer beads;
- meeting individual dietary needs, hair and skin care needs etc.

Supporting children and young people to keep safe - our absolute priority is to keep children safe. We have clear policies and procedures and a foster carer handbook to support staff and carers to achieve this. We carry out robust assessment and checks on all carers, promote careful matching, provide ongoing training and therapeutic support/advice for our carers who are supported by qualified and experienced staff 24/7. We carry out direct work with children and young people and help them to develop their own stay-safe strategies.

Wishes and feelings - we will always help and support children to express their wishes and feelings and participate in decisions that affect them.

Preparation for independence – a plan for independence is drawn up in partnership with the young person and their foster carer, alongside the 'Pathway Planning' process. This identifies the strengths and needs of each young person and the resources that are available to achieve the young person's aims and objectives. SFS support includes guidance and assistance around the basic tasks of daily living and the resources and emotional support to empower the young person. This includes the provision of a grant from SFS to assist the move to independence.