Supported Fostering Services

Statement of Purpose

August 2026

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1. About the provider – Who we are, our status and constitution

The name of our service:	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, Responsible Individual (RI) and Agency Decision Maker (ADM):	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 parents and local authorities to enable children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential within a safe, stable, caring family environment.

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

2. Description of the location of our service

Our office is located in central Cardiff.

3. 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. We also provide child and parent placements (there is no age limit for the parent).
Gender of people using the service:	We welcome applications from people, whatever their gender.
Number of people using the service:	Variable depending on the availability of our approved foster parents and robust matching of children to be placed with our foster parents.

The types of placements that we offer:

- **Short Term**
  Task centred placements to offer children security during the development of their care and support plan.

- **Emergency and Respite**
  Our 24-hour 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 foster parents, 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 neighbouring 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 foster parents who have relevant skills and qualifications to meet the specific needs of children with a disability or children with autism.

4. How our service is provided

At SFS we:

- Recruit, assess, approve, train and support foster parents who are located in the South Wales area to provide high quality individualised foster care for children.
- 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 parents and prospective foster parents, local authorities and other professionals.
- Work in partnership with local authorities and foster parents to enable children and young people in our care to thrive developmentally and achieve their full potential within a stable, caring family environment.

5. Our foster parent recruitment, assessment and review process

- The core of our service is the provision of a range of foster placements with experienced, trained foster parents skilled in working with children and young people who have had difficult early life experiences. A rigorous assessment of potential foster parents 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 parent.
- Prospective foster parents attend an initial three-day ‘Skills to Foster’ training course based on the Fostering Network and Coram BAAF material, which covers all aspects of the fostering task and includes input from existing SFS foster parents. 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 foster parents 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 background checks are undertaken to confirm the suitability of the applicants: this includes a medical check and references.
- The assessment is presented to our independent Panel, which consists of people with specific experience and expertise in childcare and includes representatives from the health, education and social work professions, as well as a foster parent from outside SFS. At least one member will also have been in care themselves. SFS social work staff and the Service Manager, who acts as an advisor are also present. Together they will consider the application and recommend whether they think the applicants should be approved as foster parents. Prospective foster parents attend the meeting and can contribute to the discussion. The Panel’s recommendation is passed to the Agency Decision Maker who makes the final approval decision.

- The performance and capabilities of our approved foster parents are reviewed annually, 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 foster parents' 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 Agency Decision Maker will make the final decision if the foster parents are considered suitable to continue fostering for SFS.

- If an assessment is at Stage Two foster parents have a right to appeal to SFS or to an independent Panel called the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) should the agency decide not to proceed with their assessment. This mechanism can also be used, post approval should SFS seek to terminate approval as a foster parent.

- Further information can be provided by SFS on request.

6. 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 parent if we are confident that they have the skills and expertise to meet that child's individual needs.

- The skills and expertise of our foster parents 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. Our foster parents produce 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.

- Where possible planned transitions, including meetings and visits to the home and overnight stays are arranged.

7. Outcomes and Services for children and young people

7.1 - Children and young people in our care are happy and supported to maintain their ongoing health, development and overall well-being.

- ***Supporting social, intellectual and education potential by:***
  - Supporting children to stay in the same school, where this remains in their best interest e.g., by ensuring foster parents can provide transport as necessary.
  - Working in partnership with the placing local authority if the child has to change schools, to identify appropriate options and secure a place.
  - Working in partnership with schools to try and prevent any disruptions/exclusions arising from a child's behavioural needs.

- Helping to secure a statement of special educational needs so that young people who need specialist schools or specialist support can access it.
- Arranging and paying for additional tuition if this is required.
- Supporting our foster parents to maintain close contact with their child in placement's school and ensure that they attend parent's evenings, special events held at the school, school plays, trips and social gatherings.
- Ensuring children have the necessary school uniform and equipment and that foster parents create an environment in the household that encourages learning and supports children to complete their homework.
- Recognise achievement at the child's level through our 'Reach for the Stars' reward programme. We also provide financial rewards for young people who sit exams at GCSE and A level.

- ***Supporting children with their leisure time***
  - SFS foster parents 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 can enjoy holidays for the first time in their lives.

- ***Promoting good health and well-being***
  - SFS strives to promote the highest standards of physical, psychological 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***
  - 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 based in the same building as SFS.

- ***Promoting Contact Arrangements***
  - 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.
  - We can facilitate contact at our offices, by prior arrangement, 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 agreement with SFS.
  - Where appropriate, contact can take place in the foster parent's home, if this is safe for all household members and in the best interest of 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***
  - SFS have experience of providing care for children and young people from a range of cultures/religions and languages.
  - Our support includes:
    - 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 diverse cultural and 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.

7.2 - Children and young people feel safe and protected from abuse and neglect

- SFS have clear policies, procedures, training plans and a foster parent handbook to support staff and foster parents to achieve this.

- SFS carry out robust assessment and checks on all foster parents, promote careful matching, provide ongoing training and therapeutic support/advice for our foster parents who are supported by qualified and experienced staff 24/7.

- Safe Care Plans are in place and updated as necessary to ensure safety issues are understood and managed appropriately.

- We ensure every foster parent has an up-to-date Safe Care policy which meets the needs of each child placed with them. We work directly with children to help them understand how to protect themselves from significant harm, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, deprivation, discrimination, and accidents.

7.3 - Preparation for independence

- Plans for independence are drawn up in partnership with the young person and their foster parent, alongside the statutory 'Pathway Planning' process, led by the Local Authority.

- The Pathway Plan 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 offering guidance and assistance for young person and foster parents in managing the tasks of daily living and developing new skills in managing money and resources as well as emotional support and encouragement to empower the young person and assist them in moving towards a more independent lifestyle. This includes the provision of a grant from SFS to assist the move to independence.

7.4 - Services for children in placement

- All children and young people are given an age-appropriate Guide that provides information about SFS and their placement, including who they can contact if they are unhappy or worried.

- Supervising Social Workers undertake 1 to 1 supervision with foster parents and conduct home visits, they speak to young people in their home and record these discussions.

- For the annual Foster Parents review, our Supervising Workers routinely seek feedback from children in placements and the foster parents own birth children.

- SFS provide packages of care tailored individually to the child's identified needs, which can be 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.

- SFS monitor compliance with the child's care and support plan / placement plan during monthly visits to the foster parents. 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 and Placement Plan as the child grows and develops.

- Our foster parents and social work staff will contribute to these meetings. We support every child to participate in meetings and decisions that affect them.

- Young people are encouraged and supported to attend their Child Looked After reviews and participate as best they can, which may include making a referral to an Advocacy Service if requested or if it is felt appropriate.

- SFS run consultation and activity events that provide the opportunity to speak directly with young people and ask for feedback about their experience which provides an opportunity for them to shape service policy and procedures.

8. Services for foster parents

- At SFS we provide our foster parents with:
  - Advice and support 24/7, 365 days a year, from our team of qualified and experienced social workers and administrative support.
  - A Foster Care Agreement.
  - Written information and guidance in the form of a Foster Parent Handbook and our Policies and Procedures for Foster parents.
  - Minimum Monthly visits to the foster parent'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 foster parents if, for example, they are dealing with a child's behaviour that is particularly tricky. Monthly consultations for foster parents, facilitated by a psychotherapist are provided as and when needed, to provide specialist advice, support and strategies to help foster parents deal with children and young people's complex emotions.
  - An ongoing training programme; every foster parent has a Personal Development Plan, which is reviewed at least annually in line with their re approval.
  - Allowances and expenses.
  - Respite – SFS offers foster parents 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 foster parents.
  - 'Foster Talk' membership – all SFS foster parents are members, paid for by the agency. This provides a variety of benefits including independent advice and a 24-hour legal helpline.

9. Services for local authorities

- SFS provides:
  - a range of placements with experienced, well trained and supported foster parents.
  - 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.
  - an inclusive fee that ensures that each child receives the services they need – there are no 'hidden extras.'
  - 24-hour availability.
  - Contact facilities.

- We have a proven record of accomplishment of working in partnership with local authorities and will always welcome the opportunity to discuss what SFS can do for you.

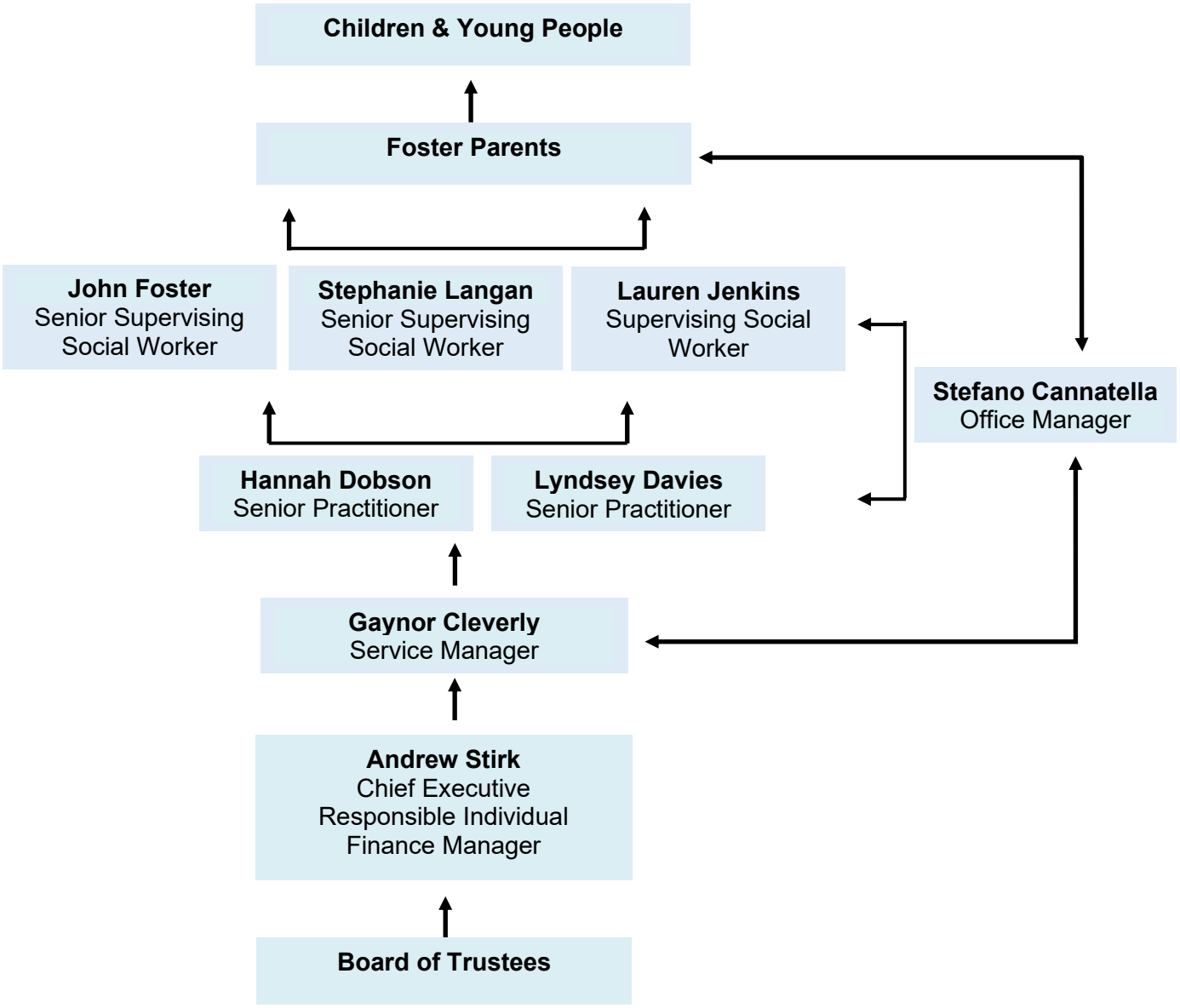
10. Our premises

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

11. 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.

12. Our organisational structure and staffing arrangements



- **Board of Trustees**
  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 he 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 as well as undertaking the ADM function.

- **The Service Manager**
  The Service Manager has responsibility for the day-to-day delivery of services to children and foster parents and to manage the SFS staff team. She is supported in this by Senior Practitioners, who provide management cover when the Service Manager is absent.

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

- **Office Manager**
  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 consultant to monitor and review our practice.
  - A variety of external trainers to provide a range of training for our foster parents and staff.
  - A range of qualified therapists to support our work with foster parents 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 parents 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 our 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 parents. Administrative staff also complete training relevant to their job descriptions.

- **The numbers and qualifications of our staff**

Responsible Individual	Business Degree	30 years working in social care, Magistrate	Has been the RI for SFS in Wales since its registration in 2005
Service Manager	Dip (SW) NVQ Level 4 in Management	28 years as a practicing childcare social worker	Manager of SFS Wales since 2005
Senior Practitioners & Supervising Social Workers	Our Senior Practitioners (2) and Supervising Social Workers (3) all have a Social Work Qualification and are registered as Social Workers with Social Care Wales.		
Office Manager	Our Office Manager has a law degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in legal practice.		

13. Secure storage of records

- Our foster parent and young person database record keeping system is widely used in the fostering and adoption sector, it is called CHARMS. We also use cloud-based IT systems protected with passwords and anti-virus software.

- Our records and systems are maintained in accordance with Regulation 39 and Schedule 2 of the Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

- SFS ensures that:
  - Records are accurate, up to date and held securely.
  - Records regarding each approved Foster Parent are held for no less than 15 years after the termination of approval.
  - When a young person moves on from their foster parents, all records provided by the Local Authority relating to that child will be offered back to the placing Local Authority. If these documents are not required by the placing Local Authority, we will securely remove the information from our database six months following the date of the placement end.
  - Records will be made available to the Welsh Ministers on request.
  - Young People who use our service are made aware of their right to access information we keep about them in our record.
  - All approved foster parents sign a Foster Care Agreement which outlines the agency's expectations about Confidentiality and Data Protection.
  - Training regarding Confidentiality and Data Protection is provided to all foster parents and additional guidance is available within the Foster Parent Handbook.
  - Records are routinely audited by managers to ensure compliance with the service standards set out above.

14. Governance and quality monitoring arrangements

- SFS are committed to continual improvement and development to meet our service standards and objectives.

- 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 takes 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 includes:
    - 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 parents.
    - Regular consultation with children in placement, our foster parents 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 parents, support groups, staff meetings and supervision, annual reviews, Statutory Reviews, consultation events and questionnaires.
    - Ensuring policies and procedures are up to date and complied with.
    - Completing quarterly Quality of Care Reviews to monitor and evidence key performance indicators and provide evidence of 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
    - Maintaining 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
    - Completion of an annual return, including a Statement of Compliance, for Care Inspectorate Wales.

15. 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 incident 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 with making a complaint. The complaint framework is set out in three stages.

Stage 1	Informal resolution
Stage 2	Involvement of the Service Manager.
Stage 3	Referral 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 to investigate matters raised. 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. Complaints are also recorded and reported to CIW through inspection activity and notifications and shared with the Trustees via the RI reporting framework.

16. Whistleblowing

- SFS has a whistleblowing policy in place and a copy of this is available to all staff and foster parents who may wish to raise concerns.

17. Allegations

- Any allegations of abuse will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. We will work with the appropriate local authority and ensure that the Regulatory Authority is kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation. SFS will ensure foster parents are provided with access to independent support through membership with Foster Talk and will maintain contact should a formal investigation be instigated.

Supported Fostering Services
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