

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL'S FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Purpose has been drawn up in compliance with Standard 1 of The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. This Statement of Purpose outlines the range of information required under Standard 1.4

This document will be presented to cabinet for review on a regular basis.

THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Vale of Glamorgan Council delivers its statutory responsibilities as a fostering service, as defined and set out in the Fostering Service (Wales) Regulations 2003 and Care Standards Act 2000, across teams within Children and Young People Services. Social workers for the fostering agency are based in the Placements and Permanency Team, situated within the Docks Office, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT.

The geographical area that the service covers is the area of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, described in the report of the Council's Joint Review (2007) as being ...

“ a largely rural area of some 33,000 hectares. It has a population of some 121,000 which has steadily increased in recent years because people have been moving to the area. Large parts of the area are rural but most people live in towns. The main town and largest centre of population is Barry, with nearly 50,000 residents. The Vale of Glamorgan is a relatively prosperous community and, in comparison with many other parts of Wales, has a healthy population. There are some areas which suffer from economic, environmental and social difficulties such as high unemployment, substandard housing, low educational achievement, poor health and high levels of crime. The most deprived wards are Castleland and Gibbonsdown in Barry; these are in the top fifth of Welsh wards in the index of multiple deprivation”.

The Placements and Permanency Team provides family foster placements for Vale of Glamorgan children. The majority of its carers live within the boundaries of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

At the time of writing this statement, the Vale of Glamorgan Council has 83 registered foster care households looking after 105 children.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The fostering service within the Placements and Permanency Team holds five key service responsibilities. It recruits families that wish to apply to become carers for the Vale, assesses applicants, trains applicants and approved carers, supports approved foster carers and matches those foster carers approved by the Vale to children who are in need of being Looked After by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

In providing those key responsibilities the fostering service works within the legislative framework of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 and the accompanying National Minimum Standards. The Fostering Service is subject to an annual inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to ensure that it is compliant with these Regulations and Standards.

The fostering service also recognises good practice, and is committed to meeting, the UK National Standards as published by Fostering Network (1999).

CORPORATE PARENTS

The Vale of Glamorgan Council act as a Corporate Parent to children they look after. The primary responsibilities of the Corporate Parent are most directly associated with those children who need to be looked after away from their home. Once it is determined that a child needs to be looked after, the Corporate parent must be satisfied that the child's safety, health and educational needs are met.



AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The Placements and Permanency Team aims to provide a range of placements for children and young people in need of being Looked After in the Vale so that they can live in an environment that keeps them safe from abuse and neglect and encourages their emotional, health and educational development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

- ❑ To provide a stable home environment for children and young people who are placed with Vale carers to allow them the opportunity to reach their developmental potential
- ❑ To provide a service that is committed to keeping the needs of the Looked After Child/ Young Person as central to its purpose
- ❑ To work within a clear and accountable framework for matching children and young people's needs to the skills of foster carers which takes account of potential risks
- ❑ To promote the racial, cultural and religious identity of children and young people and give consideration to the gender, sexuality, disability of fostered children and young people when identifying a placement
- ❑ A commitment to improving placement choice by the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds that reflects the community of the Vale
- ❑ The operation of a competency-based foster care system of assessing, reviewing and supervising carers
- ❑ The operation of a payment for skills scheme that allows for career progression for carers who wish to become full time, fee paid foster carers
- ❑ To provide qualified social work staff to supervise foster carers
- ❑ To operate a referral process, working in partnership with childcare social work teams, which reflects the needs of children and young people as identified by the National Assessment Framework.
- ❑ To work in partnership with childcare teams and Reviewing officers to support the implementation of individual children and young people's care/pathway plan

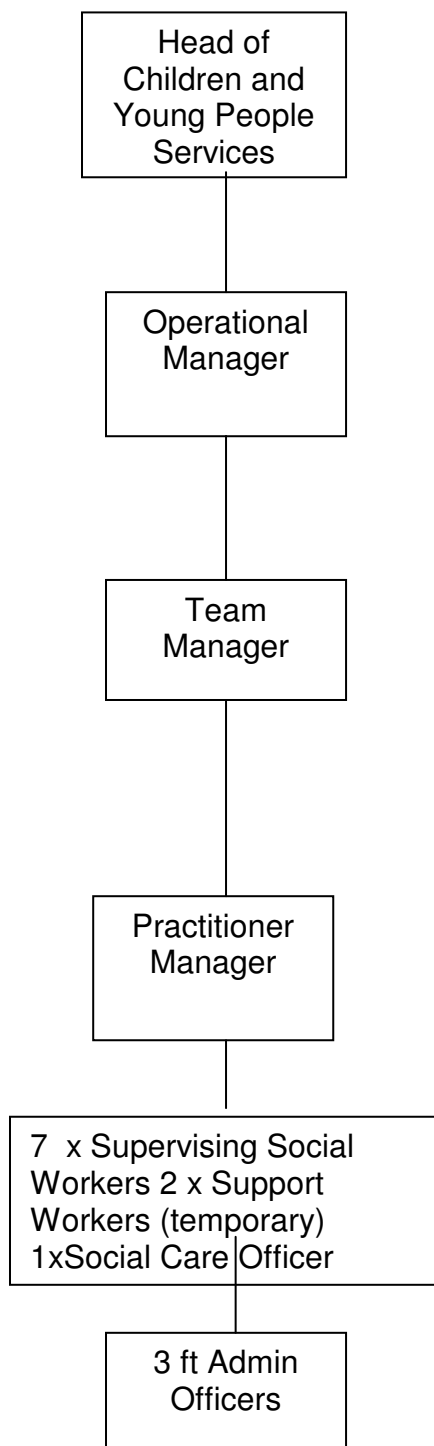
Make the Difference Foster for the Vale for the Vale

- ❑ To provide and maintain a comprehensive package of support to foster carers to ensure that lines of communication remain transparent and to minimise the risk of placement disruption. This includes a foster carers Forum, monthly practice support groups and a summer support scheme for looked after children and the foster carer's children.
- ❑ Provision of 24 hour support for carers, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year
- ❑ Provision of a rolling programme of training for carers and staff, including QCF Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People
- ❑ To operate appropriate information systems that will provide the opportunity of collating and monitoring relevant data with which to measure outcomes for looked after children that will achieve or exceed the National Minimum Standards for Foster Care.
- ❑ To provide a professional service that helps to maximise positive outcomes for looked after children.



MANAGEMENT

The management structure of the service:



STAFFING

Karen Conway RSW	Operational Manager Responsible Individual	DipSW (2005) PG Cert in Managing PQSW (2013)
Alison Tyrrell RSW	Team Manager Registered Manager	DipSW (2002) PG Cert in Managing PQSW (ongoing)
Debbie Reece RSW	Practitioner Manager	BA Hons SW (2009)
Martyn Blackmore RSW	Social Worker	CQSW (1987) DipSW (1987)
Amanda Hindley Morris RSW	Social Worker	DipSW (2002) PQ6
Gareth Matthews RSW	Social Worker	BA Hons SW (2007)
Abbey Durrans RSW	Social Worker	BA Hons (2013)
Florbella Afonso RSW	Social Worker	DipSW (2002)
Carol Sinnett RSW	Social Worker (Agency) (Part time)	CQSW (1987)
Veronica Barker RSW	Social Worker	DipSW (2006)
Martha Cirino RSW	Social Worker	DipSW (2005)
Terry Price	Social Care Officer	
Colette Raymond	Senior Administration Officer	ECDL
Carol Organ	Administration Officer	ECDL
Megan White	Administration Assistant	

FOSTER CARE SERVICES PROVIDED

- Short Term Fostering Placements
- Emergency Fostering Placements
- Long Term Fostering Placements
- Respite Fostering Placements

RECRUITMENT OF CARERS

The Placements and Permanency Team is committed to recruiting a range of carers to meet the needs of the children and young people of the Vale. To do this, a recruitment strategy has been drawn up as part of the wider placement strategy. Targeted recruitment materials have been designed to attract carers who wish to foster large sibling groups, children with disabilities and carers for teenagers.

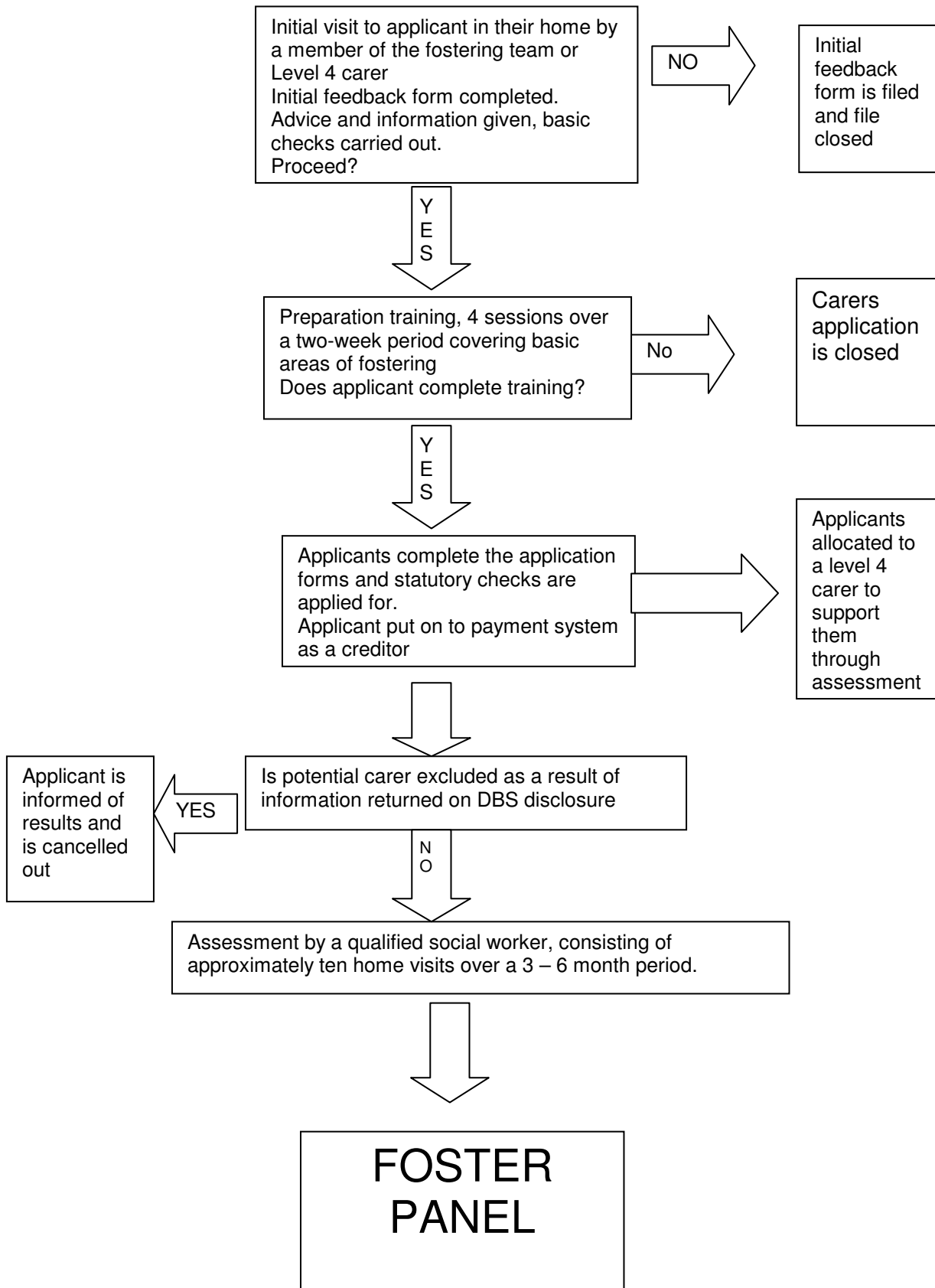
There is a pre-approval support and advice process for applicants who register an interest in applying to foster for the Vale. It ensures that there is enough information and guidance provided to applicants to allow them to make a considered decision about whether they wish to proceed with their application before they reach assessment or panel. Preparing the children of applicants is also provided as part of the assessment.

The Vale runs a payment for skills scheme that offers a career structure to carers who wish to join it. We currently have carers' at all four levels of the scheme.

The service reports on its foster panel activities yearly in the Quality of Care Report. A copy of this report is available on request.

RECRUITMENT OF CARERS

The recruitment and approval process is as follows:



TRAINING, SUPPORT AND REVIEW OF CARERS

Approved carers will be offered a rolling programme of training covering the essential core subjects required to provide a skilled service. Carers are also given the opportunity to qualify in QCF Health and Social Care Level 3.

The Vale of Glamorgan is committed to providing high levels of support and supervision to all of its carers and will provide professional supervision on a monthly basis at least, unless otherwise agreed with the carer. Supervision is formally recorded and signed by both the Supervising Social Worker and the foster carers.

A summer support scheme provides activities for young people who are in foster care and foster carers own children throughout the summer holidays.

All carers will be annually reviewed. This review will include an evaluation of training received in the past year and recommended training for the year to come.

FINANCIAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The rates of allowance and fees are available from the Placements and Permanency Team. The fostering service has a dedicated finance worker. The allowances are reviewed annually, and foster carers are notified of changes. Updated financial information is provided to all carers on an annual basis. The fostering service has implemented the National Minimum Allowances for Foster Carers. The current allowances and fees are attached as appendix one.

The local authority provides a looked after children education coordinator who will provide children and foster carers with support and advice if they are experiencing difficulties with education. The health authority provides two looked after children nurses who will provide support and advice to children and foster carers regarding health issues, they will also be responsible for carrying out annual medicals on all looked after children over the age of ten.

INSURANCE

All carers with the Vale are covered for Public Liability Insurance within the Vale of Glamorgan Council's own insurance policy.

The Vale fostering service pays for carer's membership of the Fostering Network, which ensures that carers receive legal insurance cover to pay for legal costs incurred as the result of an allegation made against them or a member of their immediate family.

All Vale carers are required to have their own house and contents insurance. In the event of damage caused as a result of fostering, carers are asked to claim from their own insurers. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will cover any excess or increase in premium incurred as a result of this claim. Should carers' own insurers reject an insurance claim then financial re-imbusement in relation to the claim will be considered by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Foster carers arrange their own car insurance and are required to have business cover.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The full procedure on making a complaint regarding the provision of services to a child or family is available from the Fostering Service. What follows is a brief summary. The complaints process follows the good practice outlined in the Welsh Governments guidance "Listening and Learning". Child protection concerns are dealt with under Child Protection Procedures.

A complaint can be made to the worker involved, the workers manager, the complaints officer or by contacting any member of Social Services staff who will pass the complaint on to the relevant manager. There are three stages at which complaints are dealt with.

Stage 1 – Local Resolution – complainant brings concerns to the attention of the person providing the services locally. We must make an attempt to resolve matters within 10 working days.

If it is not resolved, or the complainant asks for formal consideration, then the complaint proceeds to stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Consideration – the complainant has the right to ask the local authority for formal consideration of the complaint. This is usually an investigation, but could take some other form such as mediation. A report with findings, conclusions and recommendations must be produced. The authority must respond to the complainant within 25 days of the request to move to this stage.

If not resolved at this stage then the complainant may take any outstanding complaint about the actions or decisions of the local authority or the Independent Panel to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The PSOW may opt to take a complaint before the local authority procedure is exhausted.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ

Tel: 0845 601 0987
Fax: (01656) 641199

Complainants can also contact the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales who are responsible for the registration and inspection of fostering services in Wales.

CSSIW
Government Buildings
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4UZ
Tel: 0300 062 8800

SCRUTINY OF THE COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS PROCEDURE

All complaints and allegations received by the Placements and Permanency Team are collated centrally by the Registered Manager. A report is produced by the Registered Manager on an annual basis on the nature, process and outcomes of these complaints and allegations. This report is given to the Operational Manager of Children and Young People Services and also to the Vale's Child Protection Co-ordinator. The report is also presented to the Foster Panel for independent scrutiny as part of their quality assurance role.

THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF DETERMINATIONS PROCESS

Existing foster carers and applicants who are unhappy with a decision made regarding their non-approval or approval status can apply to AFA Cymru to have this decision scrutinised by the Independent Review of Determinations body. This is an independent panel that can make recommendations to the fostering service regarding decisions made.

Contract Manager,
Independent Review Mechanism Cymru
Children in Wales
25, Windsor Place
Cardiff, CF10 3BZ
Telephone: 029 2034 2434

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

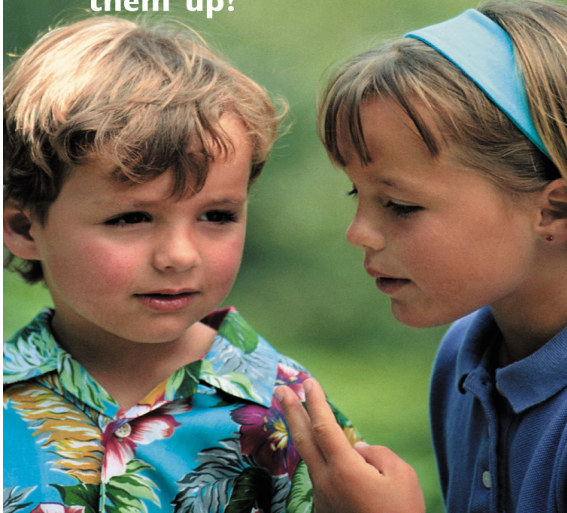
The Fostering Service has a policy for staff on “whistle blowing”. This has been adapted to apply to foster carers and is available from the Placements and Permanency team.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Vale of Glamorgan Fostering Panel meets on a monthly basis. The panel has a responsibility for ensuring the quality of assessments presented to them, and for the general service provided to carers by the Placements and Permanency team. This is monitored via carer’s reports which are completed as part of the foster carer’s annual review and also from management information which is presented to panel on a regular basis. The Policy and Quality Assurance Officer along with senior management audit the fostering service every two years.

From January 2008, an annual Quality of Care Report has been submitted to the CSSIW as part of the annual inspection process.


**They’ve lost everyone else
- would you split
them up?**



If you think that you can offer a foster home to a sibling group, then contact us to find out more about fostering for the Vale.

**Make the Difference
Foster for the Vale**

VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG



tel: 01446 725358
email: fostercare@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/fostercare

Appendix one

The Vale of Glamorgan Council~

Foster Care Allowances

From April 2015

Ages of child	Amount paid
0-4 years	£159.00
5-15 years	£145.00
16+ years	£182.00

Carer Level	Amount paid
1	£0.00
2	£53.20 per child
3	£155.40 1 st child £135.20 subsequent children
4	£322.00 1 st child £280.14 subsequent children