

**Foster Care Group Wales**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**May 2021**



**Pro-Copy Business Centre**

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

This Statement of Purpose sets out the aims, objectives and values of Foster Care Group Wales along with the facilities and services the agency provides. This document has been produced in accordance with the following regulations:

**The Regulated Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2019**

**The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018**

**Regulations and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016**

**The Regulated Services (Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2017**

**The Children Act 1989**

**The Children Act 2004**

**The Children and Young Persons Act 2008**

**Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014**

This document (is reviewed at least annually and if there are any changes made to the service) is provided and/or made available on request, to

* Employees
* Foster Parents
* Local Authorities
* Children and Young People
* Fostering Applicants
* The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
* The General Public or other interested parties

The statement of purpose is provided at each inspection to the relevant CIW inspector and is also published on the FCGW website.

Foster Care Group Wales is a private limited company based in Llanishen, Cardiff. The company is registered under the Companies Act 1985 (company No: 4078467) and is a registered Independent Fostering Agency with the Care Inspectorate Wales.

Foster Care Group Wales has two Directors; Mr Kevin O’Connor and Mrs Dawn French, who is also the Responsible Individual. The manager is Sarah Morgan.

The agency provides a range of fostering services for children who are looked after across South/West Wales; Cardiff, RCT, Caerphilly, Merthyr, Vale of Glamorgan, Torfaen, Swansea, Newport, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Ceredigion.

**2. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND STAFFING**

**2** Directors (one who is the responsible individual)

**1** Manager

**1** Quality Assurance/Placements Manager

**2** Senior Practitioners prPractPractitioners Practitioners

**2** Finance

**4** Supervising Social Workers

**1** Medical Advisor

**1** Legal/HR Advisor

**1** Placements Officer

Chloe Sargent

**1** Administrator

**Foster Care Group Wales Staff**

There are two Directors of Foster Care Group Wales (FCGW). Mr Kevin O’Connor is the majority shareholder and founder of Foster Care Group Wales. Mrs Dawn French is a shareholder and is the Registered Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker. Dawn attends at least three foster parent events a year, one of these include a foster parent support group. The other events give opportunity for Dawn to meet with the children/young people who are in placement with the agency foster parents. Dawn attends the agency office at least once a week and is available to all staff members and offers supervision to the Agency Manager and Quality Assurance Manager. The Manager meets with the Responsible Individual on a frequent basis to monitor service performance and to discuss and implement strategic plans for development. Dawn also attends quarterly management meetings at the agency premises.

Foster Care Group Wales aims to ensure that all staff have continuous and ongoing access to appropriate training opportunities to enable them to develop their skills and knowledge, which is a requirement of registration for social workers. All members of staff have monthly supervision and annual appraisals within which they discuss and identify their learning and development needs with their manager. A mixture of both in house and external training can be accessed as well as online training. Social workers are also encouraged to undertake training offered by our local authority partners if places are available for individual agencies. Individual training needs are tailored towards career development alongside any specialism that a social worker may be interested in developing.

A number of supervising social workers with the agency have been trained in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, a treatment method for children with symptoms of emotional disorders, including complex trauma and disorders of attachment. FCGW focus on a more holistic model of care, with the aim of offering placements that can combine traditional high-quality nurturing care within a more therapeutic fostering approach.

**Operational Managers**

**Sarah Morgan** is the Agency Manager for Foster Care Group Wales. Sarah joined the agency in 2013 and has over 19 years’ experience in children’s services, having worked in the local authority as a social worker in child protection, adoption and fostering. Sarah has a Diploma in Social Work and Post Graduate Diploma in Quality Management and is responsible for all FCGW operational matters, including facilitation of foster parent support and social work staff supervision.

**Lyndsey Hippsley** is a Senior Practitioner at Foster Care Group Wales. She joined the agency in 2018 and has over 18 years’ experience within the social work field having worked in the rapid response team, CLA, fostering and adoption and family placement team. Lyndsey has worked as a support worker, social worker, senior practitioner and Team Manager. She provides valuable support to Sarah and deputises in her absence.

**Stefanie Whetton** is also a senior practitioner in the team. Stef has worked for Foster Care Group Wales since 2009 and was supported by the agency to undertake her Social Work training through the Open University. Stef qualified with a BSc (Hons) in Social Work in 2012. Stef is responsible for all foster parent and staff training for the agency. Stef, like Lyndsey, will also deputise for Sarah in her absence.

**Kayleigh Smith** is the Quality Assurance and Placements Manager. Kayleigh has worked for Foster Care Group Wales since 2008 and was supported by the agency to undertake her Social Work training through the Open University. Kayleigh qualified with a BSc (Hons) in Social Work in 2016. Kayleigh is responsible for overseeing all matters in relation to placement matching, contracts and finances, and undertaking Quality Assurance for the agency.

The staff team is made up of qualified social workers with specific experience in childcare and fostering. At present all supervising social workers have at least five years’ experience in fostering. All team members demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional training and regularly access in-house and external training opportunities.

**Supervising Social Workers**

Supervising Social Workers carry a small caseload of approved foster parents to whom they are responsible for providing support and supervision on a regular basis. They also complete assessments of foster parents, annual reviews, training for foster parents and regular consultation with the young people we provide care for.

**Student Social Workers**

Foster Care Group Wales has supported several student social workers. We provide a supportive learning environment valued by both the student and the universities. Managers and Supervising social workers are also supported to undertake training in becoming practice teachers.

**Foster parents**

We currently support fostering families across the South and West Wales region. We have one main oﬃce as a base for staﬀ located in Cardiff. Training and meeting facilities are available within our main oﬃce, in Cardiﬀ. When there is a need to hold training or meetings for Foster parents outside of this area, rooms are hired locally. This means we can deliver a local service, close to the communities of children and Foster parents. Our IT network allows Social Workers to communicate eﬀortlessly wherever they are based.

**3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Foster Care Group Wales aims to provide foster placements that ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for each child/young person placed, and that they receive quality care.

Our objective is to support, supervise and offer ongoing training opportunities to our foster parents so they can provide a comprehensive service addressing the physical, emotional, educational and social needs of the children and young people placed with them. By providing high quality, carefully matched placements, we aim to offer children of all ages a period of stability and security, focusing on positive outcomes that can be measured and evidenced.

FCGW employ policies, practices and procedures which always seek to;

* Ensure the provision of high-quality care to children and young people in a safe, healthy and nurturing family setting.
* Protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect exploitation and deprivation.
* Develop the child’s sense of identity and self-worth.
* Meet the child’s individual needs in accordance to their care plan.
* Achieve high-quality placement stability rates and positive outcomes for children and young people in all areas of their lives including health, education, family and social relationships, emotional wellbeing, identity, self-care and social presentation.
* Seek the views of children by regularly consulting with them and promoting participation.
* Recruit, assess and ensure that foster parents receive professional guidance and support to help them fulfil their roles as effectively as possible.
* Provide high quality, accessible training enabling carers to develop their skills and knowledge to provide highest quality placements and better meet the needs of children.
* Offer placements that carefully match the specific needs of the child to the foster parents’ skills, experiences, and family lifestyle.
* Promote positive working relationships and good communication between the agency and local authorities to promote good practice for the benefit of children and young people.
* Maintain the skill level and knowledge base of staff, managers, and panel members by providing effective training and staff development programmes.
* Maintain secure and accurate records for children, foster parents, and staff that evidences the quality of the fostering agency and compliance with legislation and guidance.
* Ensure that the Foster Panel operates according to guidelines set by legislation and regulations in relation to foster parent approvals, reviews, allegations and complaints.

**4. SERVICES PROVIDED**

Foster Care Group Wales provide a wide range of placements for all children and young people aged 0-18 years, whatever their circumstances. Our foster parents have the knowledge, skills and experience to meet the needs of a broad range of placements.

* **Emergency Placements** (provided at short notice, including out of hours)
* **Short-term placements of any duration** (for a child whose long-term placement is still undecided)
* **Long-term placements/permanence** (care up to and into adult independence)
* **Sibling placements**
* **Parent and Child Placements** (family-based environment where parenting skills can be modelled, observed, and assessed in line with the placement agreement)
* **Short term breaks** (intensive short-term foster care to support families in crisis)
* **Solo placements** (for children and young people who are unable to be placed alongside other children)
* **Respite care** (one off or regular short stays away from main foster parent/s or birth family)
* **Placements for children with disabilities** (with carers who specifically have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of a child who has disabilities)
* **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children**
* **When I’m Ready** (these placements can be negotiated with the placing authority to enable young people to remain in foster placement after the age of 18 to support their transition into adulthood).

**5. OUTCOMES AND CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN**

Foster Care Group Wales has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the foundation for all our work with children and young people.

In Wales this is expressed in seven core aims:

1. **Have a flying start in life and the best possible opportunity for future growth and development.**
2. **Have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills.**
3. **Enjoy the best possible physical, mental, social and emotional health,**

**including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.**

1. **Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.**
2. **Be listened to and treated with respect with race and cultural identity recognised.**
3. **Have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional well-being.**
4. **Not be disadvantaged by poverty.**

The UNCRC states that children have the right to a voice and for their opinion to be heard and valued on matters that affect them (article 12). Foster Care Group Wales ensure that a number of opportunities are provided for the child’s voice to be heard and this ethos is embedded into our practice. We hold an annual child’s consultation day to which all children and young people placed within the agency are invited. This is arranged and facilitated by the staff team and uses fun and creative activities to encourage children to express their opinions on a variety of subjects. The day also provides an opportunity for children and young people to meet and interact with their peers and to develop their own social networks within the agency. As there are a number of social events throughout the year, the aim is to promote feelings of inclusivity and a sense of belonging for all children, young people and foster parents who are part of Foster Care Group Wales.

An important part of promoting the voice of children and young people in the agency is the relationship that is built between supervising social workers and the children who are placed. The children and young people are formally consulted by the supervising social worker as part of the foster parent’s annual review and throughout the year additional consultations are completed and recorded. Children are routinely seen within foster parent’s supervision visits and supervising social workers record their observations and discussions with the children. Where appropriate, supervising social workers are also encouraged to take the children out of the foster home to consult with them independently, including within school holidays or at times of difficulty within placement.

Alongside these events, consultation also takes place through questionnaires and online surveys that the children are encouraged to complete, to share their views and opinions on service development and their wider experience of being in foster care.

Children are also encouraged by the supervising social worker and foster parents to attend their CLA reviews and any other meetings that directly affect them. Foster parents may be guided by their supervising social workers regarding the best way to prepare children for such meetings to enable them to participate to their fullest capacity.

When children move on from a foster placement, an ‘End of Placement Reflection’ is used to seek the child’s views about their time within the placement and how they feel about the way in which it ended. Feedback provided by both the young person and the local authority social worker (if acting as an advocate for the child) is analysed by the manager and placements manager to inform future placement matching for the family, identify any potential support needs and to continue developing services.

Outcomes for children are also Foster Care Group Wales’ priority as part of the All Wales Fostering Framework. As a Framework Provider, Foster Care Group Wales undergo an Annual Quality Performance Assessment which is based on a 360\* consultation approach, including seeking feedback from children and young people in placement. The Framework is an ‘outcomes focussed’ framework and as such the Annual Quality Performance Assessment seeks to acquire evidence of the agency’s ability to promote positive outcomes for the children in our care and provide an analysis of how well the agency is performing at meeting these outcomes.

The outcomes identified within the framework, upon which the agency is evaluated, are categorised in the following way;

* Education
* Health emotional and behavioural
* Family and social
* Identity
* Social presentation
* Self-care
* Safeguarding

From the outset of undertaking an assessment of prospective foster parents the agency ensures that diversity and acceptance of difference is approached and explored fully. The Agency’s Equal Opportunity Policy aims to develop and provide services on the basis of equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices, without prejudice to race, culture, gender, religion or disability.

Foster Care Group Wales aims to provide placements where there is a respect for and promotion of the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people. The agency runs a diversity training programme for approved foster parents facilitated by an external trainer. The pre-approval and post-approval training encourages care provision that respects the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background of children and young people who are looked after throughout our agency. Foster parents are provided with the necessary information, support and training to enable them to provide the best possible care and to promote the heritage of a fostered child or young person. The agency encourages foster parents to actively research the different cultures of children placed in their care.

**6. RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF FOSTER PARENTS**

**Recruitment**

The majority of our foster parents have been recruited by word of mouth and recommendations from existing foster parents, social workers and staff. We also have a website which provides potential foster parents with information about fostering and the process of enquiry, assessment and available support to help them make informed choices about fostering for the agency.

Enquiries may be made via our website or by telephone. We recognise the diverse society and communities in which we live and work and always aim to embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

Initial enquiries made by the public will be dealt with by a member of the team and a ‘Fostering Enquiry Form’ will be completed. Preliminary basic information will be obtained e.g. location of caller, number of people in the household (adults and children), bedroom space, current working hours, any childcare experience, and where they heard about the agency.

All enquiries are then passed onto a Manager in the agency who will contact the enquirer within 7 days of their initial enquiry to arrange a visit and discuss their interest further. A record is kept of all fostering enquiries received.

The agency actively promotes raising the profile of the Welsh language in accordance with the core values set out in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014.

The practical measures which have taken place to incorporate the Welsh language into the culture of the Agency include;

* Providing opportunities for staff members to learn basic Welsh. Two members of staff were supported to attend a basic Welsh language skills course. In the recruitment of any new staff, the ability to communicate in Welsh is considered a desirable skill.
* For Agency information/advertising is available in both English and Welsh.
* Working closely with existing bilingual foster parents and children to consult about any ideas they may have for promoting the Welsh language within the Agency.
* To network with individual Local Authority’s Welsh Language Officers to find out what is currently available and going on in each area to promote the “Active Offer”.

**Assessment**

Initial visits are undertaken by the Manager, or the Director in the prospective applicants’ home. Information will be provided about fostering, the needs of children requiring homes and the services of the agency. The prospective foster parents’ motivation will also be discussed. If deemed appropriate to progress further, an information pack and application form will be provided.

* Once the application form is received, a letter is sent to the applicant acknowledging receipt of the application and advising them that they will be contacted within 7 working days with an allocated supervising social worker to begin the assessment. The applicant’s written consent to all necessary checks is obtained at this stage to proceed with the assessment.
* A qualified social worker then completes a thorough initial assessment. This visit provides key information about the skills, experience and knowledge required to be a foster parent. A conversation will also take place about relevant checks (e.g. DBS, Health and Local Authority) required.
* Enquirers are able to ask any questions about the process at any point. The social worker will consider the potential of the prospective foster parent through discussions around their skills and practical requirements. The social worker will then make a recommendation to the manager who then decides whether the applicant should progress to full assessment.
* All assessments are carried out by suitably qualified, supervised, registered social workers in accordance with the Regulated Fostering Services (Service providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) 2019. All assessments are completed by social workers within the team. Foster Care Group Wales encourages prospective foster parents to meet with other agency carers for advice and guidance and to attend training and workshops whilst being assessed.
* The Form F assessment is carried out through a series of face-to-face interviews and meetings with the applicants in their home. A comprehensive evidence-based assessment is completed of the prospective applicants covering their motivation, capabilities, and individual skills. The suitability of the home, finances, feelings, and views involves all household members including applicants’ children who may live away from home, as recommendations are made in terms of matching alongside the family.
* All applicants and adult members of the household are required to have enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks, Local Authority checks (within the area they currently live and any areas they have lived over the previous 10 years), Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) checks and Medical checks to ensure their suitability to become approved foster parents.
* References will also be obtained from employers where applicants have worked with children or vulnerable adults. The agency will also seek at least two personal references from people who are able to comment on their suitability to become foster parents. The personal references are received in writing and followed up by an interview with the supervising social worker.
* Where an applicant has children with an ex-partner, references will be sought from the ex-partner in relation to their suitability to care for children as a foster parent. The agency is mindful of the possible sensitivities around this and will discuss with the applicants prior to sending for references.
* Applicants are required to attend Skills to Foster Training prior to completion of the assessment report and presentation to panel. The Skills to Foster Training provides an introduction to the role of a foster parent and the issues involved in caring for children who are looked after. Feedback from this training course is incorporated into the assessment.
* Where the applicants have previously applied to foster or adopt for another agency, the agency will follow the good practice protocol published by the Fostering Network regarding” transfer of carers” and ensure we work closely with the responsible local authorities to ensure that the care and needs of any children in placement are not to be disrupted during the transition.
* When foster parents transfer from another agency or local authority, a written reference will be requested and FCGW will ask permission to view the foster parent’s file. Should the applicant refuse permission to seek references, the decision to proceed will be discussed with the Agency Manager.
* If at any time during the assessment there are concerns about the suitability of the applicant, the assessing social worker will discuss the concerns with the applicants and the manager.
* Once the Form F report is completed and all checks are received, the assessment reports are presented to Foster Panel for a recommendation as to whether the applicants are suitable. The panel consists of a range of professionals and lay people who have an understanding of the foster parent’s role. Applicants are invited to attend foster panel, alongside their assessing social worker. The process from application to panel should take no longer than 6 months.
* Foster Panel’s recommendations regarding the suitability of the applicants are considered by the Agency Decision Maker within 7 working days. The Agency Decision Maker will then make a decision regarding the suitability of the applicants to be approved as foster parents, taking full account of all panel member’s recommendations into consideration when reaching their decision.

**Representations/Independent Review Procedure**

* If a decision is made at Fostering Panel or by the Agency Decision Maker to refuse the application, the applicants will be written to outlining the reasons for this decision and will be provided with information regarding their right to appeal. They will be advised that if they wish to challenge the decision, representations should be submitted to the Agency Manager/Director within 28 days of the written notice of the decision.
* Alternatively, a request for review of the decision can be made to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) within 28 days of the written notice and information will be provided on how to access the IRM. The IRM can also be activated at a later stage following review by the agency (see below).
* The only circumstances where the foster parent will not have the right to request a review by an Independent Review Panel is if they are regarded as disqualified as a result of a conviction or caution for a specific offence.
* If written representations or notification of a request for an independent review are not received within this period, the decision will be confirmed, and approval is withdrawn.

**Post Approval**

* Once approved, the foster parent will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker who will visit within one week of approval. All successful foster parents are provided with a certificate outlining the terms of their approval and a Foster Care Agreement. They are also provided via CHARMS “IT system” all of Foster Care Group Wales’ agency policies and procedures, which includes all aspects of the fostering task and outlines expectations of both foster parents and the agency.
* The senior practitioner within the team completes a training and development plan with each foster parent and are able to access the full training schedule of the agency from the time of their approval. This enables them to expand and build upon their skill set.

**7. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

All Foster parents are paid a daily allowance for every child placed with them. Payments are made on the 28th day of the calendar month. A breakdown of allowances is explained in the financial policy, and also at the “Welcome to Fostering” induction visit post-approval.

**8. TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND REVIEW**

Foster Care Group Wales offer a range of training and support to ensure that foster parents are well equipped to carry out their role. All foster parents are required to have an annual review which is an opportunity to reflect on the experience of fostering over the past year.

* All foster parents complete the Skills to Foster training during their assessment which prepares them for the role and covers areas such as working with professionals, safeguarding, managing behaviour and transitions.
* Post approval foster parents are offered a comprehensive training programme. Additionally, the agency runs regular workshops, invites guest speakers and provides presentations within support groups. Online training is also provided, and foster parents are often able to access local authority training if spaces are available.
* The foster parents are provided with the training necessary to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to provide high quality care for each individual child placed. The training programme is run annually and is timetabled around school holidays. We also recognise that some foster parents develop skills through participation within their own work-related training and encourage and support this.
* All foster parents are required to complete mandatory training on the following topics: Child Protection/Safeguarding, First Aid, Allegations, Safer Care and Record Keeping. We also provide access to a range of individualised training opportunities as identified in discussion with foster parents.
* We support our foster parents to complete the QCF Level 3 Award in Health and Social Care (Children and Young People). When the QCF became non-existent in September 2019, we introduced the All Wales Induction Framework for Health and Social Care which alongside the National Fostering Framework offers post-approval learning and development for foster parents.
* FCGW has an equal opportunities policy which applies to staff, foster parents, and young people. Training is mandatory for all staff and foster parents to assist them in understanding and valuing diversity. Applications to become a foster parent are welcomed, regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, culture or employment status. As long as they can evidence their potential ability to provide appropriate care to a child or young person all are encouraged.

**Supervision/FCGW Social Worker’s role:**

Foster Care Group Wales values the work that foster parents undertake and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people in their care. *The key to as successful placement is the quality of support that foster parents receive.*

Foster Care Group Wales offer a comprehensive range of supervision and support to foster parents, including:

* Foster parents are provided with fortnightly supervision by an appropriately qualified supervising social worker. It is the social worker’s role to ensure that foster parents receive the guidance, training and supervision needed to enable them to provide consistent, high-quality care for a child who is looked after (CLA) placed in their care.
* The supervising social worker (SSW) will support the foster parent when children are placed and ensure CLA documentation is received.
* The SSW will ensure that the children in placement are seen at least quarterly and that the child’s views are sought and clearly recorded.
* The SSW will give consideration to any help or support that foster parents’ family members may require.
* The SSW will work in partnership with other professionals and attend CLA reviews and any other meeting involving the child.
* The SSW completes the foster parents’ annual review.
* The SSW must inform responsible line manager immediately of any complaints, issues or allegations.
* The SSW must make and record at least one unannounced visit per year.
* The SSW will work in accordance with FCGW policies and procedures and demonstrate an understanding of relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.

**Support out of hours**

Foster parents have access to a qualified supervising social worker 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to support them in meeting the tough demands of their role. Managers are also available out of office hours to support the staff and foster parents should a serious incident arise or if advice is needed.

**Support group meetings**

Foster parents have access to quarterly run support groups that are facilitated by the manager. The Responsible Individual attends at least one of these meetings. These groups provide peer-peer support and an opportunity for foster parents to share and exchange knowledge and advice. Often guest speakers are invited, or small workshops are run on topics relevant to the fostering role.

**Foster Parents’ Consultation Group**

Foster Care Group Wales value the experience and knowledge of the foster parents working for the agency and as such are in the process of setting up a consultation group. The aim will be to meet at least bi-annually with a group of foster parents who have a particular interest and are happy to be actively involved in shaping the service. A range of topics will be discussed, as decided by the agency staff team/management and the foster parents themselves. The agenda will be designed in collaboration with foster parents and the intention that their views and opinions will be represented in any major decisions that affect the running of the service. FCGW will have a formal ‘forum’ to discuss the issues that matter to our foster parents. The Manager and Responsible individual will also attend these meetings.

**Fostering Network**

FCGW provide membership to Fostering Network for every fostering household in the agency. Fostering Network provides independent support and advice for foster parents, including those facing allegations and complaints. There are several other benefits to the Fostering Network membership, for example access to a range of publications, an online community and many financial benefits such as discounted prices for certain activities and services.

**Reviews of foster parents**

* Foster Care Group Wales has a robust system in place to ensure that foster parents are reviewed annually. Reviews will occur sooner following a significant incident or upon changes to a foster parent’s circumstances or to the household, as per statutory requirements.
* Our review process focuses on evidence of the core competencies required to complete the fostering task, giving consideration to the continuing appropriateness of any terms of approval and also includes regular appraisal of skills development and training. This is to ensure that the quality of care provided is the best it can be for the child.
* A full report is completed by the supervising social worker. Contributions from the child’s social worker, any educational professional, and other professionals involved in the child’s care plan as well as the children’s views are sought and incorporated. The views of birth family members are also sought as are the views of foster parent’s birth children if they reside in the household. The health and safety report, pet assessments, and relevant safer care policies are reviewed and updated in line with the review. Any other recorded feedback that has been provided within the review period, for example by other professionals, will also be incorporated into the review documentation. All recorded consultations with children that have taken place within the review period are considered, including for children who have since moved on. This may include ‘End of Placement Reflections’ or consultations that have taken place while the child was placed. Foster parents’ own views are sought in preparation for the review, and they are encouraged to reflect on their own performance and development over the previous year.
* The review paperwork, with all additional evidence, is given to the registered manager or senior social worker who will conduct the review visit in the foster parent’s home. The recommendation is then considered by the Agency Decision Maker.
* Foster parents have sight of the report completed by their supervising social worker prior to the review taking place and are given the opportunity to share their views.
* Following the review visit, foster parents are provided with a copy of the annual review report completed by the reviewing officer and a letter outlining the outcome.
* The agency may only propose to amend a foster parents’ terms of approval following a review in accordance with fostering regulations.
* In line with regulations, foster parents must have a review within their first year of fostering and this must be presented to the fostering panel. Reviews will also be presented to the panel if any significant events, including complaints or allegations, have occurred. As good practice and as a quality management measure, the agency also presents the reviews of foster parents to the fostering panel every three years post-approval.
* Where a change of approval is proposed, the agency must issue a “qualifying determination” and provide details of the applicants’ right to appeal or access the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).
* The Responsible Individual reads every annual review.

**9. REFERRALS AND MATCHING**

As a small agency, we can maintain excellent communication between the placements team, social work team, foster parents and local authorities.

We believe that the careful attention and effort put into the placement and matching process are integral to offering high-quality, stable placements within which children can meet their full potential.

In order to promote positive practice in this area we;

* Have dedicated placement officers who respond to all enquiries about placement choices and liaise closely with supervising social workers, foster parents and local authorities. This ensures the best possible match for the child and foster parents.
* Hold monthly placements meetings with the Manager where Supervising Social Workers are invited to discuss any foster parent who have been recently approved or come back on the vacancy board, ensuring that the placements team always have a thorough up-to-date knowledge of the matching criteria and personal circumstances of each family awaiting a placement. Within these discussions we can consider the needs of each member of the fostering household, including birth children and any children who are looked after in the home.
* Ensure that supervising social workers complete end of placement reflections with foster parents, offering opportunities to identify what has worked well, what challenges foster parents have faced and how these may affect future matching decisions. This information is then relayed to the placements team within the monthly placement meeting.
* Devise photographic pen pictures of each of our foster families and their homes. These are sent alongside a comprehensive Individual Placement Matching (IPM) form to enable local authority social workers to have access to as much information as possible during the initial matching stages, including the ability to see the living and study space available to a child.
* Complete evidence based, personalised IPMs for each match, drawing upon information from a wide variety of sources and wherever possible, including feedback from local authority social workers and children who have previously been placed.
* Work with foster families to create personalised welcome books and letters for any child who has been successfully matched, allowing the child to have information about the home, family set-up and the interests and personalities of the people they are going to live with.
* Have devised further profiles to include pen-pictures for any child already living within a fostering family, to be used to inform the placements team, local authority and any children who are potentially matched with the family, ensuring that the children already within the home are given a voice within the matching process. These are completed by the young people themselves in the format of an ‘All about Me’ booklet. A shorter document outlining the needs and matching considerations for each child is also completed from the perspective of the foster parents.
* Ensure that an FCGW social worker is always present at the time of a new placement in order to help facilitate the meeting, promote accurate and open sharing of information and support the foster parent in their role of settling the child into the home. Foster parents are provided with support and advice around the actual placement meeting on how to help support the child during this difficult time.
* Ensure that all newly placed children are provided with a memory box and items to ensure that they can keep all of their cherished and important things safe. Younger children are also provided with their very own ‘patch’ teddy who ‘writes’ a letter to the child welcoming them to their new home and asking that they care for him/her.

Our aim is to ensure that each child is offered the very best chance at stability and in order to do this we are committed to constant development and learning. We meet monthly to ensure that we are constantly reflecting, analysing and evaluating not only the successes and challenges encountered by the children and young people in our care, but also the needs of the whole fostering sector and whether there is anything we can do to better meet these needs.

**10. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Quality Assurance Manager completes regular audits of all case files, recordings, and checks required of foster parents. The Agency Manager ensures that formal supervisions of the supervising social workers are completed and recorded. All quality assurance matters are discussed at management meetings and where applicable within staff supervision and agreed actions are recorded.

**External Inspection**

As a regulated Fostering Agency, Foster Care Group Wales is inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). A copy of our latest fostering inspection is available to the public via our website and via the website of CIW at [**www.ciw.gov.uk**](http://www.ciw.gov.uk)

**Fostering Panel**

As per regulations, Foster Care Group Wales hold regular Fostering Panels that are used as a quality assurance measure for the approval of new foster parents as well as for the review of existing foster parents. The panel are also available to offer advice and guidance on a wide range of issues, including specific cases or applications, as well as wider service delivery. Feedback on the quality of reports and information provided to the panel members is sought at every panel meeting and is used to inform practice. Panel members have access to learning and training opportunities. They have an annual appraisal completed by the Agency Decision Maker and Manager, focusing upon their ability to develop their knowledge, experience and research in respect of updated legislation and fostering issues.

**All Wales Fostering Framework**

Foster Care Group Wales is an approved Framework Provider and as such are monitored and accountable under the conditions of the Framework contract. As Framework Service Purchasers, local authorities have the option to raise complaints, concerns and compliments with the Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru. As part of the embedded contract management, the agency must provide information to the Consortium on service delivery and the quality of care provided is evaluated annually through the 360\* degree Quality Performance Assessment.

**Allegations or concerns**

Concerns about standards of care or allegations against foster parents are reported in accordance with FCGW child protection and safeguarding policy. The Manager oversees all cases where carers conduct or issues around care is being investigated and ensures that all referrals are made to the appropriate local authority safeguarding officer.

Following conclusion of the investigation all cases are taken to panel in the form of a comprehensive report or review. Recommendation is then made by the social worker regarding re-approval and support. Any required training or development needs of the foster parent are identified. Recommendations made by the fostering panel will be considered by the ADM as to how to proceed. Should it be deemed that termination of approval is required, the need for a referral to the DBS will be considered by the registered manager, the safeguarding committee, and the Responsible Individual.

**Representation and Complaints**

Foster Care Group Wales place an emphasis on resolving any complaints and representations at a local level wherever possible. A copy of the complaints policy and procedure is available on request and is available to all the agencies foster parents via our CHARMS IT system. Details of the policy is contained in the children’s guide. All complaints and allegations are fully investigated following the agency’s policies and procedures.

The Operational Manager is responsible for ensuring that procedures are followed in accordance with guidance and legislation and that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner. The Responsible Individual is made aware of any complaints and, where appropriate, this is then discussed in management meetings. Any outcomes or recommendations are carefully reviewed and any resulting practice or learning issues considered, in order to ensure and improve quality and processes.

Any quality assurance issues arising from complaints and allegations are managed and reported to the Quality Assurance Manager, who also monitors the quality and effectiveness of FCGW complaints procedures.

All compliments received by the agency are recorded. Below are a few recently received comments that have been made about our staff and the service that we offer:

‘I know that my supervising social worker has my needs first and foremost covered. I can talk openly and honestly to my social worker. She always listens and gives her honest opinion’.

‘I have always felt that FCGW have given me all the support I needed at anytime I have needed it’.

‘there is excellent communication with the placements team’.

‘we cannot fault our SSW, checks in on us, regular visits, cares about our own children as well as foster children. She is a credit to the agency’.

‘both the director and manager are the most approachable people always so supportive…’

**Home Visits**

Dawn French (Responsible Individual) visits the foster parents in their own home to ascertain their views, impressions, and expectations of the agency, and also takes the opportunity to consult with any children placed on an individual basis.

**Quality of Care Report**

Foster Care Group Wales review the quality of care provided by the agency as often as required, but at least every six months in accordance with regulation 63 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. The Quality-of-Care Report includes comments from foster parents, children placed with foster parents and the responsible local authority. The report is provided to CIW and a copy is available on request.

**11. USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

***Agency Contact Details***

**Foster Care Group Wales**

**Pro-Copy Business Centre**

**Parc Ty Glas**

**Llanishen**

**Cardiff CF14 5DU**

[**www.fcgw.co.uk**](http://www.fcgw.co.uk)

**Telephone: 02920689849**

***Inspectorate Wales***

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**Rhyd-y-Car**

**Merthyr Tydfil**

**CF48 1UZ**

**[www.ciw.gov.uk](http://www.ciw.gov.uk)**

**Telephone: 0300 062 8888**

***Children’s Commissioner for Wales***

**Oystermouth House**

**Phoenix Way**

**Llansamlet**

**Swansea**

**SA7 9FS**

**01792765600**

[**www.childcomwales.org.uk**](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)