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**TORBAY FOSTER CARE SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**2018 TO 2019**

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1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Standard 16 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 and Chapter 4 of the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4. There is a requirement that all Fostering Services provide a written Statement of Purpose setting out the aims, objectives and details of the service and facilities provided. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated each year.   
The Statement is intended to provide a clear description of the service for the information of foster carer, service users, Council staff, elected members, professionals in other agencies and members of the public.

Copies of the Statement of Purpose will be published on Torbay’s fostering website and will also be available to:

* Children’s Services staff who are involved in providing services to children and young people in care
* Foster carer’s and people who are being assessed as foster carers
* Torbay’s Children in Care Club

http://www.torbay.gov.uk/children-and-families/fostering/

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

**This statement of purpose is guided by:**

* Children Act 1989
* Fostering: National Minimum Standards (2011)
* The Care Standards Act 2000
* The Fostering Service (England) Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
* The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 2; Care Planning, Placement and Case Review 2015
* Family & Friends Guidance (2010)
* Transition to Adulthood Guidance (2010) including Staying Put
* Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) regulations 2009
* The Children and Social Work Act 2017
* The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
* Safeguarding Disabled Children 2009
* Short Breaks 2010

3. Aims and Objectives

Torbay’s Foster Service is determined to provide outstanding service to all children in our care to ensure the best possible outcomes for the wide range of children who are looked after by Torbay.

Torbay recognises the importance of recruitment, training and support for our foster carers to ensure they are able to exceed in their role of meeting the needs of our children through their childhood and into adult life.

**The aims of the service:**

* To provide all our children with a well-planned, stable and safe place to live where they can grow, thrive and reach their full potential.
* To know, understand and respond appropriately to the assessed needs of all our children. To ensure that Children Looked After and their families are well supported, and that life chances and opportunities are maximised by their experiences of our service.
* To achieve early permanence for those children in our care who cannot return to live with their families.
* To have sufficient foster placements to allow choice and best matching.

**The objectives of the service:**

* The provision of well planned, high quality, local placements which meet the needs and enhance life chances of our children. All children should experience a happy childhood, benefitting from excellent parenting and education, able to experience a wide range of opportunities and develop their own talents leading to a successful adult life.
* To achieve permanent and stable placements in foster care for all children whose plan it is to remain in care. All placements should only end in a planned and considered way.
* To understand the importance of the relationship between a child and their foster carer and ensure carers are recognised as core members of the team working with the child.
* To recruit sufficient foster carers with the relevant skills and experience to offer placement choice, matching and placement stability.
* Foster carers will be provided with high quality supervision, support and training. Foster carers will be encouraged to develop their skills and understanding to enable them to support more complex and harder to place children.
* To take into account children’s wishes and feelings and encourage them to participate in decisions about their care. To ensure the child’s voice is heard, considered and where appropriate acted upon. To value each child as an individual with their own unique needs and backgrounds, ensure support is provided to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.
* We will place siblings together wherever possible, consistent with their assessed individual needs and informed by a sibling assessment.
* We will recognise the unique role our connected carers have in enabling children and young people to remain with adults they know and trust if they are unable to continue living with their parents.
* We recognise and value the significance of maintaining positive relationships with birth parent and wider family connections.
* To provide local placements to promote continuity in education, friendships and maintain family networks.
* We will promote education achievements of looked after children and ensure foster carers are supported to work with schools and the Virtual School to improve the educational achievements of children and young people they are caring for.
* We will support foster carers to promote the emotional and physical health of children and young people.
* We will recognise and respond to the particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs. Short break placements, Family to Family, are available to support children to remain living at home.
* We support foster placements to use the delegated authority and a backup carer process to encourage a ‘normal ‘family life without unnecessary restrictions.

4. Torbay Fostering Service Management Structure

The Fostering Service is part of Children’s Social, and is under the overall leadership and direction of the Director of Children’s Service. The Director reports to the Chief Executive and also the Corporate Parenting Board.

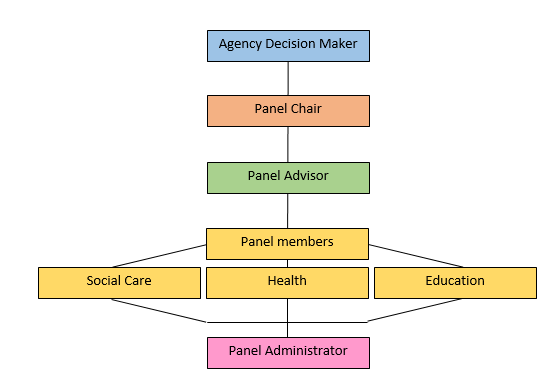
The Corporate Parenting Board is a group of people who meet regularly to oversee services provided to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The Corporate Parenting Board is made up of elected Council members and officers from the Children’s Services senior management, Children in Care Club, Health and Education, with representation of foster carers.

The Assistant Director of Children’s Services directly line manages the Head of Service and reports to the Director. The Assistant Director is also the Agency Decision Maker and makes decisions regarding the suitability of prospective carers and the continued approval of existing carers taking into account the recommendation of the Fostering Panel.

The Head of Service for Children’s Specialist Services has responsibility for the strategic management of the Fostering Service.

The Fostering Team Manager has responsibility and line management for the Recruitment, Training and Assessment of Foster carers; and the support and supervision of approved foster. The Team Manager reports directly to the Head of Service.

There is an independent chair for the Fostering Panel who is responsible for the leadership of the panel.

The Fostering Panel Advisor role is undertaken by a Permanence Team Manager.

5. Services Provided

Torbay Fostering Service is responsible for:

* Marketing, Recruitment, and assessment of potential carers to ensure sufficiency of foster carers
* The support, supervision and training of foster carers including family and friends carers(connected carers)
* Providing sufficient, safe and high quality foster placements within the local area for looked after children keeping siblings together where this has been assessed as the right plan
* Providing personalised support plans to ensure stability and successful permanence
* Private fostering arrangements in line with private fostering regulations and statutory requirements

**Recruitment Training and Assessment Team (RTA):**

RTA is responsible for all initial enquiries from prospective foster carers, alongside the marketing, recruitment, training and assessments of all prospective foster carers to the point of approval by the Fostering Panel.

**Fostering Support Team:**

Our Fostering Social Workers offer training and support to our foster carers. These carers provide short term, long term permanent placements and respite placements in accordance with their approval by our Fostering Panel.  
**Short term** placements are for a limited time period while arrangements are made for the child to return to their birth family or to an alternative permanent placement.  
**Long term** placements provide permanent care for a child or young person. This is a good alternative for some children where adoption is not appropriate. Some long term placements end if a foster carer applies to the courts and is granted a Special Guardianship Order in respect of the child they are caring for.  
**Respite placement** can be for 2 weeks or less. These placements are used to support placements with other foster carers or to cover foster carers holidays or emergencies. Respite care is also used for children whose parents are unable to care for them for short periods of time.  
**Family to Family (Short Break).** These highly specialist foster carers provide placements for children that have disabilities requiring high dependency care. These carers not only provide care for children but become a source of support for parents and the children’s family. Most are cared for on a respite basis for limited periods of time such as one or two evening a week, or a weekend each month.  
**Connected Carers (Family and Friends)** There is provision to make a placement with a relative or friend for up to 16 weeks for a child who is looked after without the prior approval of the Fostering Panel. These placements are made with the approval of the Head of Service, the placements are fully assessed and presented to the fostering panel within 16 week timeframe.  
**Fostering to Adopt:** Torbay is committed to placing young children in foster to adopt placement, this enables permanence as quickly as possible and keeps the number of placements for a child to a minimum, where the plan for a child is adoption. These placements are with approved adopters who become temporarily registered as foster carers until an order is made in the courts giving the local authority permission to place a child for adoption.

6. Functions of the Fostering Service

**Recruitment of Foster Carers**

A recruitment strategy is in place that supports the recruitment of a sufficient number and range of local foster carers to meet the needs of Torbay’s children in care. This is reviewed annually. The plan for 2017/18 is to continue our campaign to recruit for a full range of foster carers.

Information about fostering can be obtained from Torbay Council's website and preliminary enquiries made with the Fostering Team at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/children-and-families/fostering/what-is-fostering/> or 01803 207857.

Experienced foster carers are involved in recruitment activity to share their knowledge and skills at the early stage of the fostering process. A prompt response is provided to anyone enquiring about becoming a Torbay foster carer.

Following the initial enquiry there then follows an in depth phone call to explore what the enquirer might have to offer and to answer any questions they might have. If the decision is to progress further an initial home visit is made by a suitably qualified Community Care Worker from the Fostering Team. Detailed information is given to the applicants about the assessment process and the timescales specified for each stage.

Where the enquirer and the Fostering Team believe that it is appropriate to move forward, an application form is completed. The process is in two stages; the first stage will obtain statutory checks and references. If these indicate a positive assessment then it is likely that applicants will progress to stage two and a home study is completed. This involves around eight visits to the applicant’s home to meet with them and other members of their household. Torbay aims to complete both stage one and stage two within a 6 month period.

**Pre-approval training of prospective carers**

All prospective carers are required to attend preparation groups, known as the Skills to Foster course. These groups are run by experienced social workers for all prospective foster carers and always include the active contribution of an experienced foster carer. A variety of venues and times are offered.

**Assessment of Foster Carers**

Prospective carers are well prepared for the fostering task through a robust assessment of suitability. This includes training that focuses on capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way which will meet the child’s developmental needs.

At the end of the process the assessment will have explored the applicants knowledge of child care, assessment of general parenting skills, their ability to work in partnership with professionals and the families of children looked after and their commitment to learning and development.

**Support provided to Approved Foster Carers**

Torbay Fostering Service values the work foster carers do and the significant contribution they make to the lives of children and young people in their care. The right support for foster families is crucial to a successful placement. Each fostering household has an allocated Supervising Social Worker who:

* Offers support and supervision visits on a 6 weekly basis and outside regular supervision arrangements.
* Making an unannounced visit, at least once a year.
* Liaises with the Placements Team to advise on and support placement matching.
* Provides information about training and development and supports, and encourages carers to attend training including child specific training to meet the health and other related needs of disabled children.
* Organising the provision of equipment as appropriate and adaptations to carer’s homes.
* Takes a lead role in Placement Planning Meetings.
* Takes a lead role in Placement Support Meetings where placements may be fragile and additional support is required.
* Attends Children Looked After reviews as required.
* Is responsible for ensuring all statutory checks on carers and their homes are up to date.
* Undertake the foster carer’s annual review.
* Facilitate regular local support groups.
* Organises regular respite care or relief breaks where necessary for young people cared for by our foster carers.
* Take the lead responsibility when a concern or allegations is made about a foster carer and sign post such organisations as Foster Talk (FISS)
* Access to psychological services to support the care of a young person.

The service also has Community Care Workers who:

* Offer additional support to foster carers, their birth children and children and young people looked after as required.
* Support the Supervising Social Workers by undertaking some of the annual checks such as the household inspection.
* Organise the provision of equipment as required.

**Training, Support and Development Standards**

The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care have been developed to ensure that people working with children, young people and their families have the best possible training, qualifications, support and advice. The Training, Support and Development Standards consist of seven standards designed to support carers and give them a framework for training. New Foster Carers are expected to complete the seven Standards within 12 months of being approved as Foster Carers (or within 18 months for family and friends carers). Where carers might struggle to meet these requirements, i.e. because English is not their first language, the allocated fostering social worker will provide them with additional support and if needed a mentor to work with them on a one-to-one basis.

**Learning and Development Programme**

All foster carers both mainstream and kinship have access to training and are able to locate and book courses available on line themselves. On-going training is discussed regularly with carers during supervision and learning needs identified. Training is delivered locally and is scheduled for various times, weekdays evenings and weekends to suit demand.

Some training is mandatory:

* First aid
* Safeguarding
* Foster carer Induction Standards
* Safe Caring
* Moving and Handling (for carers approved to take children with disabilities)

Other core training available includes the following:

* Advocacy Skills
* Assessing the Risk to Children & Young People of Domestic Violence
* Assessing Parent-Infant Relationships
* Attachment Theories
* Basic Child Development
* Calming and defusing
* Child Protection – Generalist Safeguarding
* Delegated Authority
* Direct Work with Children and Young People
* Emergency Paediatric First Aid
* Missing children, Child Sexual Exploitation and Risky Behaviours
* Record Keeping
* Caring for Children that have been neglected
* Caring for Children that have been Sexually Abused
* Fostering Changes
* Substance Misuse in young People
* Children Looked After and the Law
* Healthy Outcomes for Children Looked After
* Preparing Young people for Independence
* Making the Most of Supervision

**Payments**

All approved foster carers receive an allowance for the child they are caring for. There are 3 levels of Fostering allowances which are skills based. Foster carers allowance is reviewed annually. Details of the allowances can be found in the Foster Carers.

**Support Groups**

* **Torbay supports 3 Mainstream monthly Foster carer support groups**
* **There is one monthly CAMHS support group**
* **There are numerous support groups run by foster carers these include Single carers group and a lunch group**
* **Bi monthly connected carer s group**
* **Bi monthly Family to Family group**
* **There is an annual celebration evening to celebrate achievements of young people in our care**
* **Christmas coffee morning for Foster Carers and Senior Management.**
* **Foster Carers quarterly Forum**

**Membership of Foster Talk**

All foster carers are provided with membership of Foster Talk. This is a non-profit organisation that can provide independent and professional advice to foster carers on a range of issues including education, tax and legal matters. It also provides carers with a regular magazine, legal protection and insurance should they need these services.

**Out of hours support**

We have Emergency Duty Cover which is accessible in the evenings and at weekends.

Other support provided to Foster Carers:

* Foster Carers Handbook
* Fostering & Adoption Website
* Social events for carers and their children
* Foster Carers Survey to inform future developments

7. The Fostering Panel

Torbay has a Foster Panel this panel is held monthly. The Fostering Panel is established, maintained and supported to meet the following requirements:

* Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011;
* Children Act Guidance Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011;
* The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
* Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

The Panel has a central list of members who can sit on both Fostering and Adoption panels with a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds relevant to fostering. The panel is chaired by a suitably experienced independent person. There is an interview process for new panel members and they are provided with an induction. Annual appraisals are undertaken with all panel members and regular training is also provided. The Panel has an independent chair to provide an objective stance. The Panel collectively provides a quality assurance function in relation to the local authority.

A Fostering Panel can only deal with any business if it is quorate. This means at least five members need to be present, including either the chair or vice chair and a social worker who has at least 3 years relevant post qualifying experience. If the panel chair is not present and the vice chair is not independent then at least one other member must be independent (Regulation 24).

8. Functions of the Fostering Panel

* To consider applications for approval and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer, and if so on what terms should they be approved e.g. number and age of children to be place.
* To consider the first review of newly approved carers, and any subsequent reviews referred to it by the Fostering Service, and recommend whether they remain suitable to act as foster carers, and if the terms of approval remain appropriate. This includes the consideration of complaints and allegations made against foster carers.
* To recommend progression through the skills levels.
* To oversee the quality of assessments carried out by the Fostering Service. To give advice and make recommendations on any other matters or cases referred to the panel by the Fostering Service.
* To monitor the out of approval and temporary connected person’s arrangements made by the Fostering Service.

Fostering Panel provides a key quality assurance function for Torbay Council and makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who sits independent of the Fostering Service management structure. They are responsible for the ratification of the panel’s recommendations.

The ADM decisions are made within 7 working days of receipt of the recommendation and final set of panel minutes (NMS 14.9). Once the decision has been made this must be given verbally to the applicant or foster carer within 2 working days and confirmed in writing within 5 working days (Regulation 27, NMS 14.10). Decision letters are sent by the Panel administrators. If the decision is not to recommend approval as a foster carer information is provided about the appeals process and independent review process.

**Approvals**

All Torbay’s Foster carers are approved by the Fostering Panel. The Panel encourages all prospective and approved foster carers to attend along with the assessing social worker when their cases are being presented as this embodies the importance of partnership working. Minutes are taken of all Panel business. Panel members understand that applicants are often anxious about attending and they do all they can to put applicants at their ease. Applicants are asked questions about their motivation to become carers and give consideration to the terms of approval most suitable for them such as age, gender and number of children to be placed.

**Annual Review of Approval**

All approved foster carers are reviewed annually. When undertaking an annual review the Fostering Service must make enquiries and obtain information it considers necessary to review whether the foster carer and their household remains suitable to continue as a foster carer for Torbay. This will include feedback from children who have been placed with the foster carer, birth family members and the child’s social worker.

First annual reviews or reviews held following a significant concern or allegation, significant change of approvals and skills level changes are considered by the Fostering Panel. De-registrations of foster carers are also presented to Fostering Panel and this includes those where there are serious concerns – see below. Foster carers contribute to and are present at their reviews and receive confirmation in writing of the outcome of their review.

**Termination of Approval**

A foster carer may decide to cease fostering for a number of reasons. Written notice to terminate approval can be given at any time, in which case the approval is terminated 28 days after the fostering service receives the notice. Once a foster carer has resigned the fostering service does not have to present the case for deregistration at Fostering Panel however the panel should be notified for monitoring purposes. Any relevant information which may inform any future reference or consideration of the person’s suitability to foster should be clearly recorded on file (Regulation 28).

The Fostering Service may reach the decision that a particular carer is no longer suitable to foster and this may be due to serious concerns about the standard of care provided. In these circumstances, foster carers can be provided with independent advice and support from a worker employed by Foster Talk and a review should be undertaken and recommendations for termination of approval must be made formally to the Fostering Panel.

If Fostering Panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) that the foster carer is unsuitable to remain registered and this is ratified by the ADM (qualifying determination) then a termination of approval letter is sent to the foster carer stating the reasons. The foster carer then has 28 days within which to make a representation to the decision maker or to apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review (Regulation 27). If no representation is received within 28 days, the decision stands.

**Access to Files**

The carer has a right of access to any information held on themselves, with the exception of third party information, and may request their file to be made available to them. Third party information held on all carers includes the range of checks and references required by law in the assessment/approval process and updated within prescribed periods. A carer may also make a request for information on behalf of a child or young person placed with them.

**Transfer of Foster Carers**

The Fostering Team provides advice to existing foster carers who want to transfer to Torbay and supports them through the process if their decision is to transfer. The Fostering Network transfer protocol is followed and the needs of any children who may be in placement are paramount. The Fostering team will complete a fostering assessment and this is presented to Torbay’s Fostering Panel for approval.

9. Foster Carer Participation

Torbay Foster Carer’s Forum is an open meeting, to which all foster carers are invited, the forum is held quarterly with members from the fostering team and senior managers also attending. The forum sets the agenda for future meetings and guests are invited to attend. The Forum considers practice and development issues for the fostering service and enables carers to have a voice in shaping policy and practice. We have working parties involving the fostering team and foster carers that will report directly to the forum. The Forum minutes are circulated to all foster carers and staff within the Fostering Service.

Foster carers and the fostering team work together to deliver training and information sessions for; foster carers, potential foster carers and other professionals.

Foster carers are represented as part of the Virtual School Governing Board.

10. Other teams that we work closely with

**Placements team**

This team provides a system which accepts all requests for placements and will identify all appropriate vacancies for the request. The initial matching of placements is then made with the child’s Needs and desired Outcomes alongside the foster carers profile in discussion with the Fostering Service.

Emergency placements will be managed via the Emergency duty team. EDT will hold details of placements that are available and willing to offer placements in an emergency.

Where possible placements are identified with Torbay’s own foster carers however in the absence of a suitable provision being available in house alternative placements are identified. The Placements Team is responsible for making placements agreements and contract with providers. Torbay is a member of the South West Peninsula Group where local authorities in the South West work together with independent providers to ensure sufficient and good quality external placement provision with preferred providers.

**Social Work Teams**

Each Child Looked After has an allocated social worker who is responsible for that child or young person. The social worker takes the lead on assessing needs, planning and supporting the child whilst in the care of Torbay. The social workers can be part of the:

* **Safeguarding and Supporting Families**

The team offers a quality service to children and young people subject to intervention via Child in Need, Child protection and Court Proceedings.

* **Children Looked After Team**

Supporting and care planning for young people in long term foster care.

* **Children With Disabilities Team**

This is a specialist team to support children under 18 with disabilities and their families.

* **Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS)**

IYSS offer support to Looked After Children and [Care Leavers](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/children-and-families/iyss/care-leavers/) from 15 to 21 years or up to 25 years if in full time education to prepare for independence.

**Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**

IRO’s are qualified and experienced social workers who chair reviews of children looked after, meet with the child and ensure their views are heard, they make recommendations regarding the care the child is receiving and make sure that plans are progressed.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The LADO role is detailed in Working Together 2015 and is in place to ensure that allegations against people working with children are progressed in an appropriate way. The LADO should be made aware of all cases in which it is alleged a person who works with a child has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child; or
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children

This includes any allegations made against foster carer. The fostering Service has a policy and procedure for investigating allegations made against foster carers.

**Medical Advisor**

Medical Advisor The appointed medical advisor provides specialist medical advice for foster carers, social workers and the Fostering Panels.

**The Designated Nurse for Children Looked After**

The designated nurse for children looked after is responsible for the organisation of health assessments and overseeing and promoting the emotional, mental and physical health of children in care.

**Virtual School**

The Virtual School led by the Virtual School Head is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children in care and supporting them with training and preparation for employment. There is a statutory requirement that every child looked after has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP). This plan is reviewed every term as part of a formal meeting and the Virtual School overseas the development and delivery of PEPs.

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS can provide specialist mental health services for children and young people looked after.

11. Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of the local authority), for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, for a child with disabilities), by someone other than a parent or close relative, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt, or they may be a friend of the family or other non-relative. A person who is a close relative under the Children Act 1989 (ie, a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether by full or half blood or by marriage), or step­ parent will not be considered a private foster carer.

Torbay Council aims to ensure that the welfare of children who are currently, or are proposed to be, privately fostered within Torbay is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

Local authorities do not formally approve or register private foster carers. However, it is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered within their area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

Torbay Council will ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children within Torbay is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by supervising the fostering arrangements and offering any necessary advice.

Children who are privately fostered will be visited in accordance with the regulations.

In the first year of the fostering arrangement, visits will be made within 7 working days of the placement beginning and then at intervals of no more than six weeks. In any second or subsequent year, visits will be at intervals of not more than twelve weeks. At each visit, the child should be seen alone unless an officer of the authority considers it inappropriate.

Torbay Council will provide appropriate advice and support to all those concerned with the privately fostered child: the actual or prospective private foster carers; the parents or those with parental responsibility; others concerned with the privately fostered child.

12. Complaints

All complaints by foster carers are taken seriously. Foster carers are able to use Torbay’s Fostering Service escalation of complaints procedure.

Complaints will be resolved informally where possible by the Supervising Social Worker or their Team Manager. Investigations into complaints and allegations are undertaken by Children’s Social Care Managers who report to Children’s Services Senior Management Team and also inform Ofsted in individual cases. Torbay Council maintains a record of all complaints and allegations made against foster carers and their outcomes.

13. Equal Opportunities

Torbay Fostering Service works to the Torbay’ Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the Council’s intranet. Torbay Fostering Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering process. Applicants wishing to be approved as foster carers will be considered irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the fostering service considers they can safely and appropriately meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence. Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person’s emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability.

14. Systems for Monitoring and Evaluating the Service

The Department has a number of systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the service, as follows:

* Supervision Social Workers, foster carers and managers receive regular supervision in order to maintain the high standards expected of carers and workers.
* All report read and signed by managers, their signature represents a check on the quality of information provided.
* Annual unannounced visits are made to all carers.
* The Agency Decision Maker reviews all Annual Reviews completed by the fostering service for all approved foster carers.
* Tracking systems are in place to monitor timescales from initial enquiry to approval.
* Feedback forms are provided to all enquiries in their information packs, at the information session ad after their preparation training groups.
* Monthly evaluations of Fostering & Adoption Enquiries inform the development of our Recruitment & Enquiry Process.
* Annual consultation with approved foster carers.
* The Fostering Panel routinely ask all prospective/approved carers and social workers presenting to give feedback.
* The Fostering Panel will also provide feedback to ever presenting Social Worker on the quality of their assessments as part of their quality assurance role.
* The Foster Carer Forum provides feedback on the Service directly to the Senior Management Team

15. Ofsted

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting fostering services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints to Ofsted is the Ofsted National Business Unit (NBU). The telephone number is 0300 123 1231. The NBU manages all calls and will redirect them as necessary. The NBU can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or at the following address: Ofsted National Business Unit St Ann’s Square Manchester, M2 7LA 27 15.

**Further Information**

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually. If you require this policy in a different language or an alternative format, such as large print, audiotape or Braille, please call 01803 207660 or email fostercareservice@torbay.gov.uk. The Statement of Purpose and Foster Carer’s Handbook are also available on the service website.

