



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Ivy House Fostering



MAY 1, 2021

The Turbine, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 8AP

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Introduction

This statement of purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate guidance and legislation that underpins the legal and best practice outcomes for the safe and effective delivery of fostering services. Including:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering services 2011 (updated 2013)
- The Fostering Services National Minimum standards 2011
- The Equality Act 2010

This Statement of Purpose is produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation 3 (National Minimum Standard 16) and includes:

- A statement of The Aims and Objectives of Ivy House Fostering Agency.
- The statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering agency.

A Copy of this Statement of Purpose will be made publicly available on our website and will further be provided to:

- Any Fostering family or prospective Foster family.
- Any Person working for Ivy House Fostering Agency.
- Any child or young person placed within Ivy House fostering service.
- Any parent / or person that has parental responsibility for a child or young person placed with Ivy House.

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually and whenever there are changes within the agency. In accordance with Fostering Regulations.

Ivy House Fostering Agency will notify Ofsted of any revision within twenty-eight days.

About Ivy House Fostering Agency

Ivy House Fostering agency has been founded by three fostering Social workers with over 45 years of combined fostering experience of working with children, young people and fostering families.

We are a close dedicated team of professionals inspired to support children young people and fostering families to succeed.

Ivy House fostering Agency is a private limited company, registered under the companies Act 1989 (Company registration Number 11777167)

Relationships and their significance are the deep roots and strong branches of our fostering agency ethos. The secure base relationship provided by our fostering families promotes not only a sense of security for children and young people but also confidence, competence, resilience and recovery.

At Ivy House Fostering we value people. We are all different and unique individuals and we know that there are no typical or standard types of fostering family.

We will run a high quality effective fostering service that values and puts first the importance of relationships.

Our Mission Statement

At Ivy House fostering agency we recognize that our fostering families are different, unique and represent many notions of family, yet they share a common value base.

To provide safe, secure and loving homes for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families.

Our Ethos

Integrity

Vision

Yourself and others

Honest

Open

Understanding

Supportive

Empathetic

Quality Relationships

The outcome is that with positive working relationships, we have the tools and powers to effect change and recovery while nurture positive relationships with our children and young people.

The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for children and young people is meaningful lifelong connections to family and the people who are important to them and have shared the joy of being part of their lives.

With trust, love, safety and healthy relationships, our children have the opportunity to develop secure attachments. Secure attachments are the foundations for healthy physical and emotional development. The creation of this secure base is fundamental to helping a child or young person feel safe and loved.

Our Fostering families with the help and support from our dedicated team will nurture our children and young people to feel secure by providing a consistent secure base for them. This will help our children and young people to feel confident enough to explore the world with reassurances when things don't go as planned.

Training and development are central to our company ethos. Learning and reflective practice will be a constant thread throughout our agency. This will enable existing skills, approaches and therapeutic expertise to be consistently built upon.

Our company ethos is in creating positive relationships by valuing children, young people and fostering families as unique with their own qualities and strengths.

We at Ivy House fostering agency embrace this way of working and will support fostering families to build warm and nurturing relationships helping children and young people thrive, grow and achieve.

Ivy House fostering Agency will work towards the five outcomes for children set out by the Government in 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' and given legal force in the Children Act, 2004: -

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution;
- Achieve economic well-being.

Quality Standards

Ivy House Fostering Agency understands that the needs of Looked After Children and young people are paramount; We understand the value, skill and commitment required of fostering families. We will treat them, their families and homes with respect;

We will provide a sufficient range of quality and diverse placements to meet the needs of children and young people.

We are committed to maintaining sibling relationships and keeping families together whilst promoting positive contact with family members;

We are committed to joint working with lead agencies to meet the needs of children and young people in Ivy Houses care.

We understand that the children and young people will have experienced significant harm prior to placement as well as the effects of separation and loss.

We recognise that children and young people's mental health needs may be complex and their need for access to therapeutic care and support is essential, for recovery.

We recognise that every day is different for fostering families caring for vulnerable children and young people. Therefore, each fostering household will receive individualised care and support.

Training and development are an important part of our ethos and we are committed to delivering consistent, relevant training to meet the needs of all members of the Ivy house team.

We are committed to learning and development and promoting all looked after children's learning and educational needs enabling all children to grow learn and achieve to their full potential.

The transition into adulthood is a major step requiring bespoke child and young person lead support. We are committed to facilitating young people remaining in the foster placement into early adulthood.

We are committed to implementing the Children's Workforce Development Council's standards for foster carers and will support carers in achieving these standards.

Aims and Objectives

Ivy house Fostering Agency are dedicated to working with fostering families, the wider community and partner agencies to promote the welfare of Looked Children and young people and improve their life chances.

We will provide stable, safe effective alternative care for children and young people at the right time and for the right length of time.

Children

- Children and young people's voices will be heard and listened to. We will actively involve them in decisions made about their lives.
- We will provide safe, secure, stable happy homes for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families.
- We will enable our children and young people to grow and live in a family environment that is welcoming and healthy.
- We will support our children and young people to enjoy and achieve positive learning experiences.
- We will support our children and young people to maintain and develop relationships and friendships.
- We will help our children and young people to build confidence in knowing and expressing themselves.
- We will promote high aspirations and celebrate individual achievements whilst noticing and praising our children and young people's unique characteristics and strengths.
- We will ensure that our young people have the independent life skills needed to successfully manage the transitions to independence and adulthood.

Fostering Families

- We will recruit safe, secure stable and happy fostering families for our children.
- We will recruit, assess train and support fostering families who enjoy being with children and young people and who have a diverse range of lifestyles.
- We will recruit assess, train and support fostering families who can promote secure healthy relationships and provide our children and young people with love, safety, comfort and a sense of worth.
- We will recruit assess, train and support fostering families to promote a sense of inclusive family membership for the children and young people in their care.
- We will enable fostering families to support children and young people to learn the life skills needed for independence and adulthood.
- We will recruit, train and assess the most talented people who understand why different approaches to parenting and caring for children and young people are needed. They will be able to reflect on their own parenting values and priorities, thus understanding the need for therapeutic parenting responses.

Ivy House Team

- We will embrace fostering family's diverse lifestyles, unique characteristics and life experiences.
- We will create a happy, successful and innovative team who will drive forward our company ethos and relationship - based service to meet the needs of the children, young people and fostering families in our care.
- We will support our fostering families and the team at Ivy House to embrace regular training and development.
- We will create a listening and learning environment.
- We will work inclusively with individuals and fostering families respecting difference.
- We will provide quality relationship-based care and support to families.
- We will model caring behaviours, build relationships, and inspire commitment to change.
- We will promote high aspirations and celebrate individual achievements whilst noticing and praising our children and young people's unique characteristics and strengths.
- We will provide a child and young person lead and focused service where the voice of the children and young people will be included in all care planning and review decision making.
- We will recruit fostering families and staff from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the identity of our children and young people are carefully considered.
- We will ensure that relevant enhanced health and safety checks are completed for our fostering families.
- We will work collaboratively to ensure that children, young people and fostering families are matched appropriately.
- We are committed to keeping children, young people and their siblings together in fostering family homes and maintaining contact for them with family members.
- We will work closely with local authorities to support children and young people's educational engagement and enjoyment.
- We will provide a professional 24 hour a day service for fostering families, children, young people and our partnering local authorities.
- We will provide access to individualised therapeutic support for foster families to effectively manage change and transitions for the children and young people they care for.

Recruitment and Assessment of Fostering Families.

Applications to become a Fostering family with Ivy House Fostering Agency are openly welcomed and encouraged regardless of experience, gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion, relationship status, culture or employment status.

Anyone over the age of 21 years can apply to become a foster carer. There is no upper age limit. Applicants must be able to safely care for and support children and young people in their home.

It is a requirement that applicants have a spare bedroom available for a child or young person. Some siblings can share a bedroom and often want to, depending on their age, gender and circumstances.

We want applicants who have the ability to

- Have stickability. To be able to hold on to children and young people when things get tough.
- Tell us when things are difficult because we know they will be at times.
- Be part of the Ivy House team.
- Genuinely like and enjoy being with children and young people.
- Be open to new experiences and the ability to be happy with small steps of progress.
- Understand that caring for our children and young people is different to caring for your own children.
- Have a great sense of humour.

The Fostering Assessment Process

Initial Enquiry Stage

Once a prospective foster carer / fostering family has enquired either through our website or through telephoning the office to register their interest we assure that one of our qualified Social Workers will phone them within 3 working days to discuss their fostering enquiry. We will answer questions and take basic information over the telephone to assess their suitability to proceed to the next stage.

Home Visit

This visit is called an Initial Visit. If both the applicants and the team at Ivy House feel that it is appropriate to proceed, and the applicants would like to progress their application to the next stage then one of our qualified fostering Social workers will visit the household. At this visit we will talk in more depth about the role of a fostering family and the skills and attributes needed to foster with the Ivy House team. We will speak at this visit to other's members of the household and gain their agreements to proceed as well as assessing the suitability of the home.

Assessment

Stage 1

At Ivy house fostering agency we have a two-stage fostering process. The assessment involves us assessing applicant's suitability and their skills to foster, but also applicants are assessing Ivy House fostering agency to decide if we are the right agency for them.

- Have a medical assessment completed by applicants GP and commented on by Ivy house's medical advisor.
- Have an enhanced DBS criminal disclosure check.
- Written consent to enable us to complete checks with the local authority where applicants live or have lived previously.
- A health and safety check of the home.
- Provide two personal referees (non-family members)
- Attend fostering preparation training course.

Stage 2

The assessment can take up to 4 months to complete from this stage. The assessment will cover the following areas:

- Individual histories and profiles of each member of the fostering household.
- Descriptions of family life.
- Relationships / partnerships and friendships.
- Experiences of parenting or providing care to others.
- Support networks. These are: friends / family who will offer support to you.
- Values / beliefs, strengths and vulnerabilities of all fostering household members.
- Valuing diversity
- Ability to manage change effectively

- The capacity to care for children and young people who have suffered harm.
- Further personal, ex-partner, education and employment references will be sought.
- Overseas assessments.
- Pet assessments

The Social worker will visit the fostering home regularly throughout the fostering assessment process. The assessment is a 2way process and requires the fostering household members to work jointly on tasks and learning to equip them with understanding the complexities of caring for children and young people who have experienced harm and trauma.

The assessing Social worker and applicants will make a joint decision based on skills, experience and family life for their suitability to foster. The Social worker will then make a recommendation as to the age and number of children that the fostering household can care for. The assessment will then be presented to Ivy House foster panel.

The Placement types at Ivy House Fostering are as follows:

- Task centred (short term)
- Long term
- Bridging
- Parent and child
- Support care/ Respite
- Emergency

The Foster Panel

The foster panel plays a vital role in the provision and monitoring of fostering services.

Once the assessment is completed the applicants will have the opportunity to read and discuss possible amendments to the report. The report will then be presented to the fostering panel. Prospective fostering families and their Social Worker must attend the foster panel.

Once the agency decision maker has made the final decision, Ivy House fostering agency will verbally and in writing inform the prospective fostering family of the outcome.

Further roles of the foster panel are to act independently to Ivy House fostering Agency. The panel advise the agency in relation to:

- New carer applications / assessments.
- Annual fostering family reviews
- Allegations or concerns
- They report on the performance of Ivy House fostering agency.
- They provide annual fostering reports.
- Panel is made up from a list of suitably qualified and experienced and vetted people who come from a variety of backgrounds.
- There will be a minimum of 5 panel members, who will have an induction are trained annually and have appraisals regarding their roles as panel members.
- The panel chair is an independent member who makes recommendations.
- The panel agency decision maker is an independent member who makes the overall decision from the recommendations of the foster panel and the Social work assessment presented.
- The panel advisor advises panel on regulations, processes and standards of fostering practice.

Foster Carer Review

All fostering families have an annual review to reflect and appraise on their previous years fostering experiences.

The main aim of the review is to determine whether the fostering family's approval continues to be suitable and whether there should be any changes to the terms of their fostering registration.

This review provides an opportunity to look at what worked well and what areas of fostering practice we can look to support and develop further.

We will set goals to achieve these aims by devising a Personal Development Plan and through the completion of the Training Development Standards.

Support for our Fostering Families

Support

Ivy House fostering families will receive support from our dedicated team. Following approval, the fostering family will be allocated a supervising social worker.

All our foster families will be registered with The Fostering Network and Foster Talk who will provide independent support and advice to them.

This service will further provide independent support and legal cover in the event of an allegation or complaint.

Supervisory Visits

At Ivy House fostering agency we understand through our wealth of Fostering experience that the right to frequent and therapeutic based support is the key to fostering successes.

We know that therapeutic fostering families are the most effective people to help reduce the trauma and hurt for children and young people. They hold the key to fostering a child or young person's sense of security and recovery.

We will therefore support our fostering families by offering 4 weekly supervised visits between our social work team and our fostering families, and more when needed.

These meetings provide opportunities for support, nurture, learning and reflection with the child and young person being central to the visit.

We will build relationships with all family members so that we can offer a need's led supportive service to our fostering families. This might include increased visits and additional support packages.

Support for Foster Carers Own Children

We are committed to supporting our foster family's children's involvement within our service. We understand that they must be included in decisions, their views and opinions listened to and heard to improve our practice and service delivery.

Foster carers own children will be included in the fostering assessment and training process. We will visit foster carers children regularly and ascertain their wishes and feelings.

We will ensure that children and young people are invited to all fostering events throughout the year.

Unannounced Visits

All our fostering families will receive at least two or more unannounced visits per year in line with fostering regulations and good practice guidance. These visits provide further assurances and evidence that the care that the fostering family provides is consistent, transparent and safe.

Emergency Support

Our fostering families will have access to advice, support and guidance 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We provide an on-call duty system that is supported by our management team.

Fostering families will feel reassured that should they need or require support from our out of office service we will be there to support guide and assist.

All the Ivy House team will have 24 - hour access to our live data base where all up to date information can be accessed and recorded.

Support Care

Fostering families are able to access and link with our support care service. Support care provides care to children and young people for short periods of time. It allows fostering families and the children and young people to have a planned break.

We will actively encourage our fostering families to take care of themselves so that they can take care of the children and young people in their care.

We encourage all our carers to link in with the support in their own family and friendship networks.

Foster Care Drop in and Support Groups

Ivy House fostering agency promote an open - door policy to our fostering families. Visits, telephone calls, emails and text messages are all encouraged.

We will run a monthly support group where fostering families can meet, network and make friends with other carers.

We understand the importance and value of regular support meetings for fostering families. We will share advice, information, learn from one another and offer that supportive branch when things have been tough.

Emotional Well - being days

We understand to care for children and young people who have experienced harm and trauma is both emotionally rewarding but also challenging. We understand the importance of looking after your family's emotional health and well-being. The emotional well being of fostering families is at the centre of our relationship-based practice. We will offer emotional support to you and your family through our qualified social work team and through working directly with our therapeutic support workers. We will work individually with you and your family and further provide group sessions to support emotional health and well-being.

Celebration Days

We will celebrate the achievements and successes of our children, young people and fostering families by hosting activity and celebration events. We will also celebrate small steps of achievement for our children and young people to help them to learn to feel good about themselves.

Transport

The day to day transport for children and young people is managed by their fostering families. This includes school and college runs and contact for children and young people with their birth families and friends.

Payments

We pay our fostering families well. The Fostering allowance is paid monthly by BACS transfer. All Fostering families should be registered as self-employed and as such should pay their own tax and National Insurance contributions and make their own pension provisions. We provide support and guidance through our accounts department in this area.

The tax relief for fostering families is generous.

Our fostering families will receive an additional monthly mileage allowance.

We will provide further allowances for the children and young people on their Birthdays and at their chosen celebrations.

Standards of Care

Record Keeping

Fostering families have a responsibility to record daily logs for the children and young people they care for. Maintaining records is an essential part of the fostering role.

The records are used to reflect a child or young person's progress and to provide evidence of safe care practices. The recordings will always be shared with the local authority for the child or young person.

Any accidents, injuries, missing or safeguarding incidents that occur must be recorded and reported clearly to the Ivy House management team.

Ivy House fostering agency has a safe and secure electronic data base that fostering families will use.

Training

We are a progressive learning agency. We value learning and will provide relevant skills - based training packages for our fostering families.

The Ivy House team are qualified trainers who are able to develop bespoke packages of training to support individual learning needs.

We will deliver training both face to face, in groups, via supervision and through media resources.

We know that the success to fostering is that fostering families are provided with the skills, knowledge and understanding to care for children and young people. Our fostering families are expected to develop their fostering knowledge by attending a minimum of 3 training sessions per year.

Policies and Procedures

We have developed policies and procedures to guide fostering families in practice to keep children, young people and fostering families safe and informed about legislation and practice.

The fostering electronic manual contains information on:

- Fostering Law
- Fostering Regulations and standards of fostering practice
- Health and safety
- Safe care practices
- Equal opportunities
- Managing and promoting positive behaviour.
- Complaints procedure
- Compliments procedure
- Child protection / Safeguarding

The manual which is available online:

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/ivyhouse>

Children's Guides

Each local authority has advocacy service to facilitate the voice and rights of looked after children and young people. We at Ivy House fostering agency can access this information and act as advocates. We have produced 3 children's guides with independent advocacy agencies included.

Management Structure

Ivy house Fostering Team is made up of three Qualified and HCPC registered Social workers.

All three Social Workers at Ivy house fostering agency have a recognised social work qualification / degree and post qualifying awards and have significant years working within children and young people's services specialising in fostering and the safeguarding of children and young people.

All Ivy House staff hold HCPC registration as Social workers and have an up to date Current Enhanced DBS.

The three appointed directors have worked together within a fostering service for 17 years. They know and trust one another, work well jointly and share the same desire in making a difference to vulnerable children's lives. Their experiences include:

Monitoring, Evaluation and Management of the Agency.

Regular performance and statistical information will be collected in relation to the work of Ivy House Fostering Agency. Performance information about the Agency is reported to the Fostering Panel Agency Decision Maker and Ofsted.

We have several quality assurance measures which are in place to monitor the quality of Ivy Houses service delivery. Our quality assurance meetings to monitor the quality of Ivy House service delivery will review:

- The range of placements that we offer to children and young people.
- The safety and of our children and young people.
- The health care arrangements for our children and young people to promote their emotional and physical well - being.
- Service delivery and support with education and training for our children and young people.
- The competence and knowledge of our fostering families
- Our commitment to staff development and carer retention.
- Fostering Panels which are Chaired by an Independent Person and regular liaison takes place between the Chair of the Panel and the Fostering Agency to identify any quality assurance issues and training requirements;
- Assure the voice of our children and young people is listened to and is evidenced through the looked after review process and through the fostering families annual review

- Annual Reviews of fostering families are undertaken and these are presented to Foster Panel.
- The complaints and congratulations procedure and making sure that Fostering family's children and young people have access to this.
- Regular File audits.
- Regular supervision and annual Performance Development Reviews.

Diversity and Inclusion

Ivy House Fostering Agency is committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in every aspect.

Our aim is to recruit train develop and retain the most talented people.

These being individuals with different perspectives and experiences. We know that being a diverse and inclusive fostering agency will help us to full fill our responsibilities to offer the best individualised care to the children and young people placed within our agency.

Training on equality and diversity is strongly embedded in our agency Ethos and forms part of the pre assessment process as well as everyday practice within our working relationships.

Everyone connected to Ivy House fostering agency is entitled to live or work in an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all.

Ivy House fostering will challenge any discrimination related to any of the 9 protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010

The need to recruit foster families who are representative of the general population is reflected in our recruitment strategy.

We are totally committed to the principles of equal opportunity within the agency. No individual, child, young person, employee, fostering family will be disadvantaged as a consequence of sex and sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin, disability, religion or beliefs and age. This is inclusive of unaccompanied asylum- seeking and refugee children who also experience secondary trauma and need skilled and trained fostering families to care for them.

Discriminatory behaviour will be challenged and dealt with in line with our agency's policy.

Our agency provision and service delivery to Local Authorities, fostering families and the Children and young people in our care reflects this culture of diversity and inclusion.

The Ivy House team has the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide a high-quality service within a clear framework of anti -discriminatory practice.

Complaints and Congratulations

We have a dynamic and robust complaints procedure that every member of staff and fostering families must adhere to. We will take all complaints seriously and try to resolve at an early stage. If complaints are unable to be resolved this way, then the complaint will go to the registered manager.

If we are still unable to resolve this, we will pass the complaint to an independent person where an independent investigation will be conducted.

All children and young people's complaints will be dealt with immediately. The children and young people will all receive a copy of the Children and young people's guide which includes the complaints and congratulations procedure at the point of them being placed with the fostering family.

All congratulations will be recorded in our system and in our good practice folder.

The complaints procedure is a useful way of monitoring services. It is a positive way to inform and influence service improvements and is not to be viewed as a negative process.

Ivy House Fostering Agency Statement of purpose is reviewed annually and modified as necessary. If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to this document or Ivy House Fostering Agency, please email contacts@ivyhousefostering.co.uk.

Contact Us

Katie Duffield is the Safeguarding Manager. You can contact her on: **01909 512168** or email her katie@ivyhousefostering.co.uk. Or write to her at:

Ivy House Fostering,
Coach Close,
Shireoaks,
Worksop,
Nottinghamshire,
S81 8AP

The Children's Commissioner for England is called Anne Longfield you can contact her at:

The office for the Children Commissioner,
20 Great Smith Street,
London,
SW1P 3BT

0207 78 38 330

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
info.request@childcommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Advice and Help for children and young people in care or living away from home- Help at Hand

Help at Hand is an advice service for children and young people in care, living away from home or receiving social care services – freephone **0800 528 0731**.

ChildLine

This is a free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK, Child Line is confidential and is staffed by counsellors.

0800 1111

www.child.org.uk

Ofsted

Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England:

Piccadilly Gate,
Store Road,
Manchester,
M1 2WD

NSPCC

The NSPCC will offer help and advice, if you are worried about yourself or someone else the helpline is open 24 hours a day:

0808 0800 500 0
www.nspcc.org.uk

Corum Voice

This is advice for children and young people in care or leaving care:

Corum Voice,
Gregory House,
Corum Campus,
49, Mickleburgh Square,
London,
WC1N 2QA

0808 800 5792
help@corumvoice.co.uk
www.voiceyp.org

Frank

Drug and alcohol advice and support:

Text: 82111
0800 123 6600
www.talktofrank.com

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Helpline, information, advice and advocacy for children and young people to ensure their rights are upheld.

0800 8081001
help@nyas.net

NYAS Head Office,
Tower House,
Tower Road,
Birkenhead,
Wirral,
CH41 1FF

Help at Hand

Office for the Children and young people's Rights Director

Offer confidential help and advice about being in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with social services. They make sure that your rights are upheld.

help.team@childcommissioner.gov.uk
0800 528 0731