



**CHILDREN
ALWAYS FIRST**
Fostering Agency

Statement of Purpose

January 2025

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1. Introduction



Welcome to Children Always First Ltd. Statement of Purpose. This document sets out the framework for all Children Always First business and activity. It outlines how we will achieve our vision for children in our care.

Children Always First Ltd. was formed in December 2012 in order to make a real and lasting difference to children who need to be cared for by Foster Carers for whatever reason.

We are achieving this by recruiting, supporting and developing skilled carers and a staff team who share these values and ethos and embedding a culture of safeguarding and continual improvement throughout the Agency.

1.1 Legislation and statutory guidance

The Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance and is consistent with key legislation and guidance, including:

- The Children Act 1989 (Guidance and Regulations Vol. Fostering Services) and Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 (Standard 16)
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations (FSR) 2011 (Regulation 3)
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Ofsted in 2021 said of the Agency

"It is evident that children are at the heart of the agency. The managers, staff and senior managers care about the children. This ethos is shared by the foster carers, who take great pride in children's achievements and progress, no matter how small these are."

2. Statement of Purpose

The Children Always First Statement of Purpose is an active and organic document. It represents what Children Always First stands for and the content will evolve as the agency evolves.

The Registered Manager and Responsible Individual lead and oversee the ongoing changes and development in consultation with children and young people, carers and staff. The document is reviewed on a regular basis.

The Agency Statement of Purpose is available to all those that work with us to improve the life chances of our children. They include:

- Children, young people and their families
- Our carers and prospective carers
- Colleagues and stakeholders working for the purposes of the fostering service
- All Children Always First staff, associate consultants and advisors
- Our partner Local Authorities
- Key partner agencies
- Ofsted

3. Mission Statement

The Children Always First mission and commitment is that every child and young person in our care:

- Is safe and protected
- Thrives and blossoms physically and emotionally
- Achieves their full potential and has happy memories
- Moves on in a positive and sustainable way

The outcomes will be achieved by embedding therapeutic parenting practices throughout the Agency, encompassing both Foster Carer and the whole Staff group. The Agency is fully committed to making a difference to children and young people by adopting a therapeutic golden thread throughout everything we do, and focusing upon meeting the needs of children through supporting; supervising and training Foster Carers.

4. Aims and Objectives



4.1 Children Always First Aims

- To provide holistic services for our children and young people that will help to improve outcomes and demonstrate a real and measurable difference to children's lives.
- To commit to continuous improvement as a Fostering Agency so that the standard of care we provide far exceeds National Minimum Standards. We aspire to be 'Outstanding' and maintain outstanding care for children
- To ensure Children Always First delivers 'value for money' to Local Authority commissioners and reinvests any surplus resources into strengthening the care and support provided to our carers and children

4.2 Children Always First Objectives

- To achieve the best possible education, health and foster care outcomes for children and young people
- To ensure all of our children are safe, protected, listened to and their needs understood.
- To ensure all of our children have happy childhood memories whilst in the care of Children Always First.
- To work closely with Local Authorities and other key partners and ensure that the child is always at the centre of everything we do, and to encourage and enable all partners to do the same.
- To recruit, develop and support our carers to enable them to provide therapeutic parenting approaches and 'therapeutic environments' for children.
- To recruit, develop and support an excellent staff team who share Children Always First values and aspirations
- To utilise the very latest IT support in order to be on the cutting edge of service delivery and maximise our available resources

"The support we receive from CAF is exemplary, it has been since we started pre panel training three years ago and continues to be so. They have so much to offer and do so willingly. They are transparent in their business and everybody is working towards the same goal."

- (CAF Foster Carer)



5. Management and Governance Structure



The Children Always First Ltd. office base is located in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. We take referrals and provide placements and childcare for Local Authorities country-wide, but mainly across the West Midlands. Children Always First is a Private Limited Company registered under the Companies Act 2006 with company number 8325499.

Directors

The Children Always First company directors have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the company, its shareholders, and stakeholders. Their responsibilities include making strategic decisions, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, and managing the company's finances. Directors must also avoid conflicts of interest and act with due care, skill, and diligence.

Director

Louise Stanley is a fully qualified accountant with over 20 years of relevant experience leading finance teams in the UK, Norway, Finland and Sweden; she understands the challenges of the industry and holds the financial acumen required for such a task; Louise has a fantastic understanding of the fostering role as she also grew up in a family that fostered.

“ Management, are as fabulous as always. We feel very lucky to be part of an innovative family- focused fostering Agency and they are ensuring everything is running professionally and to the highest standard possible. ”

- (CAF Foster Carer)



Executive Management Team

The Children Always First Executive Management Team (EMT) is responsible for the oversight of the governance of the company. Membership of the EMT includes; the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial officer, the Registered Manager, Responsible Individual and the Agency Decision-Maker. EMT meets on a regular basis to:

- Endorse the Agency values and ethos
- Ensure the Agency is bound and adheres to regulatory and legal compliance
- Oversee the strategic direction of travel
- Support and challenge Children Always First's financial management
- Providing a 'critical friend' approach to quality, performance and impact of the service for children
- Ensuring policies and procedures are robust, relevant and current

" Management, are as fabulous as always. We feel very lucky to be part of an innovative family- focused fostering Agency and they are ensuring everything is running professionally and to the highest standard possible.. "

-(CAF Foster Carer)

Responsible Individual (Pending)

Alan Wood is a qualified Social Worker and Child Therapist and has worked in the field of Children's Social Care for 30 years. His Experience includes posts at Managing Director and Head of Service level. He is also a Visiting Professor and the University of Chester and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Amongst Alan's qualifications are 2 post graduate degrees from the University of Keele and York. Alan was also an award-winning Foster Carer for 9 Years, looking after teenagers on a long-term basis.

Agency Decision Maker

Liam McCaughey is a registered social worker with extensive experience in fostering. He previously worked in child protection, early intervention and residential children's homes, before moving into the fostering sector. Liam has experience of working within independent fostering agencies and Local Authorities. He is currently a self-employed independent social worker, who has roles that include: Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer, Allegations support team practitioner, Agency Decision Maker (ADM), foster panel vice chair & chair and an independent panel member for other agencies

Registered Manager

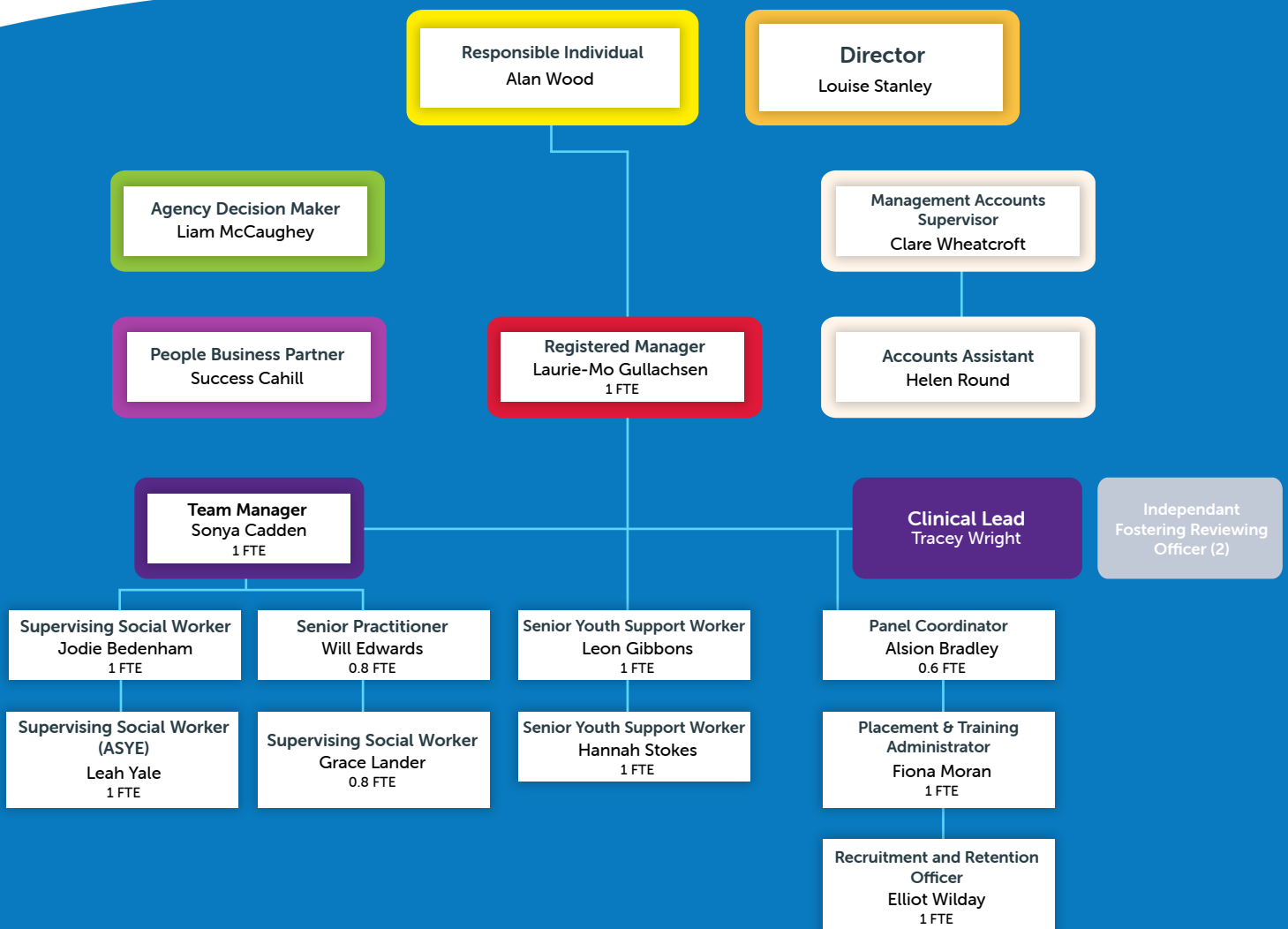


Laurie-Mo Gullachsen is a qualified social worker and Social work Practice Educator. Laurie has completed her Level 5 Management of Children and Young Peoples services in 2021. Laurie is an experienced Registered Manager. Laurie's has worked with Children and Fostering families since 2000, starting as a youth worker and then later qualifying as a social worker in a safeguarding team before specialising her practice in Fostering and working with children. Laurie has also acted in capacity as Agency Decision Maker.

Clinical Lead

Tracey Wright has worked in the NHS for over thirty years. Initially as a Registered Mental Health Nurse, working in both adult and Child and Adolescent in-patient services. She moved to Worcestershire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in 1999 as a Community Psychiatric Nurse, working with children and families experiencing emotional difficulties.

In 2007 Tracey qualified as a Systemic Family Psychotherapist and has been delivering systemic family therapy across the county since then. Tracey is particularly interested in helping teams to use systemic ideas to help formulate different stories about young people and those who care for them. She has been offering systemic supervision to professionals, individually and in groups both internally and externally as well as delivering training through attachment focused lenses. Her passion is how parental mental health impacts on children. She has also made use of training from Relate to work with couples who are experiencing conflict.



7. Equality and Diversity

“

I think the clinical guidance provided by CAF is one of its biggest assets. The first Jigsaw meeting I attended I wasn't really sure what to expect but by the end of the session with Kim Golding I left feeling inspired, reassured and listened to.”

- (CAF Foster Carer)

Children Always First is committed to celebrating equality and diversity both within the organisation and in the wider context. Children Always First wishes to create a diverse team of carers and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures.

We believe that culture and diversity paint the fabric of life and as such we are committed to celebrating a variety of festivals and events in addition to providing a proactive anti-discriminatory working environment.

We have a zero-tolerance policy towards any discriminatory behaviour or language and would treat any instance of such in the serious manner it would warrant. We operate a strict equal opportunities policy in respect of recruitment, selection and reward systems.

Individuals are valued by what they do for children and young people and/or contribute to the organisation regardless of their individual:

- race and ethnicity
- religion and belief (or non-belief)
- age
- sexual orientation
- disability
- gender and gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity



We pro-actively promote identity issues with children and young people and ensure that they leave our care with a clear understanding of who they are and where they are from, enabling pride in their identity and heritage.

Children Always First believes that diversity and equality should be at the core of the entire practice. We are committed to making this happen. Where children or carers have specific communication requirements, Children Always First will commission services in order to meet those specific needs.

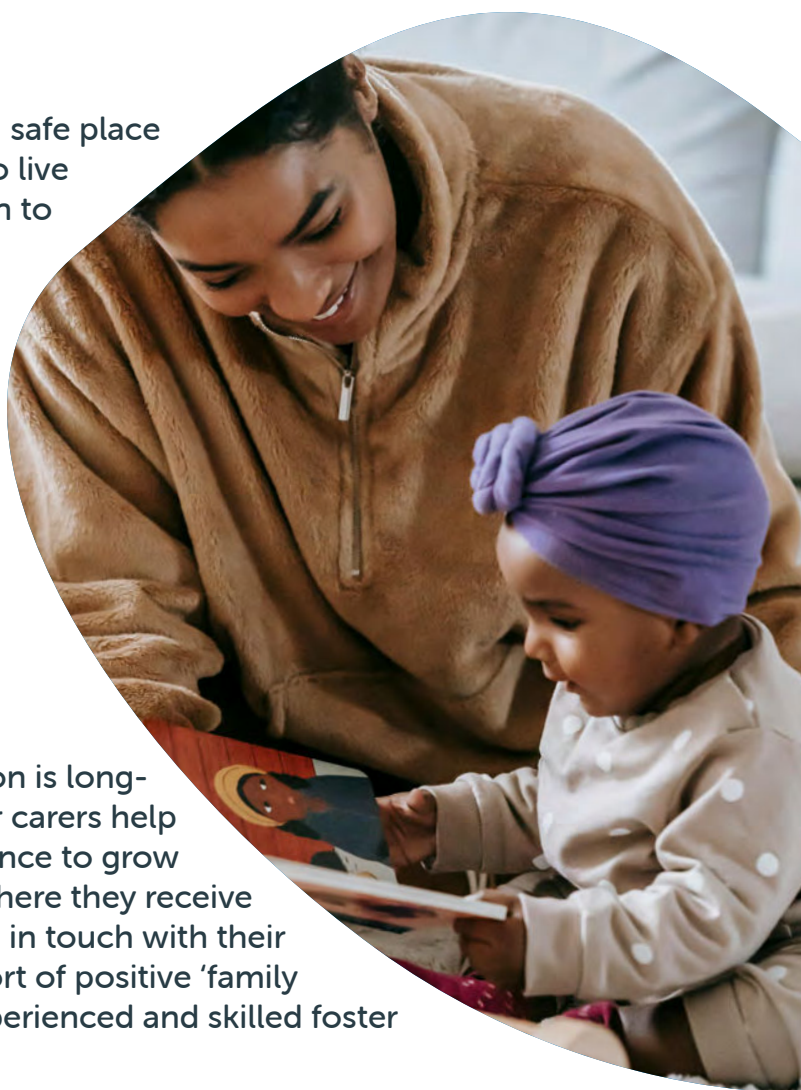
8. Placement Services



Children Always First works with Local Authorities' framework agreements to provide the right type of placements required for children. Children's safety and welfare is paramount in all placements and foster carers are trained in safer care practice. Supervision and support offered to foster carers is clearly focused upon safer care. Children Always First works in partnership with other agencies concerned with Child Protection.

Short-term Fostering

Children Always First foster carers provide a safe place for children and young people of any age to live in a short-term placement. We help children to understand what is happening to them and offer the appropriate support. Children Always First contributes to the Local Authority assessment, plans and review process for the child whilst the Local Authority engages with the family to return the child home or move to a longer-term placement or independence. The Agency provides experienced and skilled foster carers to undertake this task.



Long-term Fostering

Where the plan for the child or young person is long-term foster care Children Always First foster carers help by offering a child or young person the chance to grow up in a safe and supportive environment, where they receive care, nurturing and the opportunity to keep in touch with their family through the management and support of positive 'family time' experiences. The Agency provides experienced and skilled foster carers to undertake this task.

Fostering groups of brothers and sisters (sibling foster care)

When commissioned, Children Always First helps siblings stay together. We understand that in many cases children need the security and comfort of each other. Our Social Workers and specialists contribute to our understanding and support of the sibling dynamic in order to support carers in their tasks. If siblings live separately, (where agreed) we endeavor to support positive time together that is safe, child centred and meets the needs of all of the sibling group and provide emotional and practical support to children and carers.



Parent and child fostering

Children Always First provides placements, when commissioned, to help parent/parents who need support and security to enable either assessment of their parenting or specialist support to parent. We teach; enable; support and encourage vulnerable parents without taking over their responsibilities as mothers/fathers. This specialist task is undertaken in co-operation with the Local Authority and partners.

Respite

Children Always First provides respite care for looked after children and young people who are already fostered by other foster carers for a short time-limited period. This respite or short break, always in co-operation and agreement with the Local Authority, will be arranged in-house when our carers need to have a holiday or a break without the children. Occasionally, we suggest a short break within the existing placement when we need to de-escalate and repair challenging or difficult situations. Some children will have a respite weekend built into their care package so the carer can recharge their batteries if the fostering task is particularly demanding. All of our full-time carers are approved to provide respite as offering short break care can provide carers with valuable skills and experience.

We encourage all of our approved foster carers to identify a Support Network carer, which we can assess and train to provide temporary support to the foster carer. The Back-up carer is a close member of the foster carer established support network. We regularly review the support network of all the carers to ensure that up to date and relevant information is available.

Under 5s (Pre-Adoption fostering)

Many children aged under 5 may have a plan for adoption if they are not returning home. We prepare and support our foster carers to understand their crucial role in helping the child/children prepare for a 'forever family'.



9. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Carers



Children Always First recruits, assesses, supervises and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children and young people. Applications are welcomed from anyone over the age of 21 in line with our equality and diversity principles.

Enquiry and Initial Visit

When prospective carers express an initial interest in fostering with Children Always First, we talk to them about the Agency, how we work, and what is involved in the assessment and the requirements of the role. If they are suitable to progress into an assessment, Prospective Carers are asked to fill in an application form about themselves and other members of their household. This form gives the Agency permission to carry out the full range of required background checks.

Checks

In order to safeguard the children we care for, we need to carry out a number of checks. These include checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service and Local Authority checks. Medical, personal and employment references are also necessary. It is not possible for people to become foster carers if they have committed any offences against children, or some other serious offences. Carers are asked for proof of their identity and we ask them to have a health check to show they do not have any major health problems. This is then verified by the Agency Medical Advisor.

Pre-panel training

Carers receive an invitation to attend the mandatory pre-approval training, where they learn more about what is involved in fostering. This is a chance to meet other people who are going through the process, and talk to experienced foster carers. The training explores the impact of pre-care experiences on children in care, safeguarding and safer care, the effects of poor and abusive parenting, and explores positive ways of caring for children and young people in order to improve their outcomes. We also introduce the PACE approach and look at child development in depth.

The Form F Assessment

Applicants are allocated an assessing Social Worker who will carry out their personal assessment. The assessment covers a range of subjects relating to the needs of children who require fostering. Children Always First takes up personal and employer references. We ask carers for permission to contact ex-partners and adult children. All the information gathered by the social worker is put into a report outlining the carers' skills, future training needs and areas where perhaps they need more help. Applicants see the assessing Social Worker's report before panel and can make their own comments in writing.

Fostering Panel

In accordance with the Fostering Service regulations 2011 (Reg. 45, NMS Standard 14) the Children Always First fostering panel plays a key quality assurance role and provides objectivity and challenge to the Agency in the interests of children.

The panel has a 'core' membership drawn from a central list. Panel members hold the relevant qualifications and experience and Children Always First ensures panel is always quorate.

The assessing Social Worker presents the report to the fostering panel. Carers are invited to the panel and there is an expectation that they attend. The panel makes a recommendation to the Children Always First Agency Decision-Maker (ADM) as to whether or not to approve as foster carers. The ADM then reviews the papers and the recommendations, advised by the panel, and gives their final decision regarding approval. In the situation where prospective carers are not approved, the assessing social worker will discuss the reasons with them and the Agency formally writes to the prospective carers with the decision. Carers are entitled to put forward views and appeal the decision using the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM).

Post Approval

Once carers are approved they are given an induction session with the Registered Manager, which includes information about the Agency database, the Learning and Development Programme and working with the Agency. All foster carers sign a Foster Carer Agreement that clearly sets out the Agency expectations in terms of the fostering role in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.



“ Training is first class, the wealth of different experiences from both trainers and foster carers is second to none. ”

- (CAF Foster carer)

Matching Children and Young people

The Agency has a key role to play in the placing of children and young people with the Agency foster carers. The matching process adheres to the requirements set out in the Fostering National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations. Children Always First liaises closely with the Local Authorities following a referral to ensure all placements are closely matched with foster carers, which is overseen by a manager. Wherever possible there is robust preparation for the placement before the child arrives (unless an emergency placement makes this impossible). The Agency foster carers receive up-to-date information about the child included in the child's Care Plan. The Agency ensures that there is a comprehensive risk assessment and safer care plan for all children and young people.

10. Learning and Development for foster carers

Children Always First is committed to supporting and enabling foster carers to grow and develop through a varied and comprehensive Learning and Development programme. Children Always First provides the support and development to foster carers that enhances the holistic and 'wrap around' approach the child or young person may need. The Agency believes 'therapeutic parenting' approaches and a 'therapeutic environment' is the essential ingredient in providing a safe, positive and stable care experience to children. This is delivered via our therapeutic 'Golden Thread'.

Children Always First ensures that training is bespoke, well-prepared and delivered by a variety of experienced trainers. Training is delivered at weekends and evenings as well as during office hours so it can be accessible to all. We also offer a comprehensive online training programme through the Training Hub.

Children Always First establishes a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for each carer. The Agency requires all newly registered foster carers to evidence their skills in a portfolio, required as part of the National Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for foster carers. Carers are assisted in this task by their allocated Social Worker.





Learning and development pathway for foster carers

Pre-panel training

Our pre-panel training is delivered to prospective foster carers. Back up carers can also attend.

Induction

The Registered Manager visits all newly approved foster carers to begin the induction process.

Training, Support and Development portfolio

All new foster carers approved by Children Always First will attend group and individual sessions that will introduce and help carers to complete the TSD requirements.

Mandatory and additional training

Our Training programme runs from September to July each year. All foster carers will be required to complete the mandatory training within 2 years from approval date and all foster carers will need to renew training as follows:

Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid training is to be updated every 3 years, with all other mandatory training being refreshed after 5 years.

Specialist courses

Therapeutic Golden Thread

● Foundations for Attachment

- Foundations for Attachments is a training course for carers parenting children who have relationship difficulties. This is a DDP informed programme based upon the Dyadic Developmental Practice model developed by Dan Hughes (2009, 2011). It introduces carers to four significant challenges of parenting children whose capacity to emotionally connect with care-givers has been compromised. These are:
 - The child experiencing blocked trust
 - The child fearing intersubjective connection within reciprocal relationships
 - The child experiencing high levels of shame
 - The child miscuing their attachment needs through a pattern of expressed and hidden needs

● Nurturing Attachment

- Is an 18 week specialist Therapeutic Parenting Course.
- All primary foster carers are required to attend this course.

● Therapeutic Support Group

- What's next after the Nurturing Attachment course? Ongoing therapeutic support is offered through the monthly support groups. Bring your issues, learning and ,What works' to the group.

11. Support for Children and Foster Carers

Supervising Social Workers

All foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker (SSW). All SSWs are DDP level 1 trained (or working towards this). This role is key in providing support and supervision to the fostering household and to ensure that the environment is safe, supportive and nurturing for the child. The SSW provides monthly supervision to the foster carer/s and ongoing support as and when needed. The SSW helps the foster carer to identify the learning and development needs each year through the PDP and can facilitate access to other learning resources. The SSW liaises with the Local Authority Social Worker on a regular basis and attends important meetings relating to the child and young person.



Youth Support Team

The Agency has a team of Youth Support Workers (YSWs) who are Youth Work and DDP Level 1 trained (or working towards this). They offer invaluable support to the children and young people. Each child aged over 5 years is allocated their own YSW, who provides one to one mentoring, befriending and coaching based upon the child's needs.

The Youth Support Team also coordinate and provide a comprehensive range of groups, activities and events for children and young people to attend and become involved with. All of these activities are arranged and planned to promote children's development, for example in independence skills, self-esteem, team working:

• Welcome Packs

All children receive a Welcome Pack when they join the CAF fostering family. This is the first point of contact that the child has with the Youth Support Team and where the relationship building begins. The youth Support Worker will go through the Welcome Pack and Childrens Guide with the child.



Youth Groups

The Youth Support Team run monthly Youth Groups to provide children and young people with their own safe space to be able to express themselves, socialise and discover new things. Some sessions are structured to allow the exploration of new topics and informal education. There is also a monthly Saturday youth club which is purely for fun and all young people can attend.

The Youth Groups are to ensure that every young person has a voice and their voice is heard, therefore consultation throughout the year takes place to make sure that what is delivered is meeting the current needs of the young people.

Support for Sons and Daughters

We acknowledge that foster carers' own children play a huge part in the fostering task, and this can sometimes be challenging. CAF will provide mentoring and support for foster carers' children if required. They are also very welcome to join in the activities and youth clubs.

Social Events and Activities

Carers and children can expect a variety of social events per year. This includes a big summer day out and a big winter celebration. The Youth Support Team provide a fantastic calendar of social events for children and young people across the age ranges. This includes monthly youth groups, Have Your Say consultation groups and school holiday trips (social 'get togethers').

The Agency promotes fun and interesting activities for children and young people. This can be outdoor activities, such as bush craft, water sports, park days, and so on.

Consultation and Participation

Children Always First prides itself on consulting with children and young people and making sure they take a full and important role in shaping our services. The Youth Support Workers regularly organise and support a consultative group (Have Your Say) to talk about Agency issues which may affect them. The valuable information gathered from these activities is shared with the whole team including the Executive management team and the Directors



Therapeutic Parenting support

Our staff and carers receive ongoing training and support and are continuously supported to meet the needs of traumatized and often challenging children. Staff engage with monthly therapeutic support groups.

The Agency provides Jigsaw meetings for the network. The meeting is facilitated by a supervising social worker and attended by the Clinical Lead, and enables the professionals and carers working with the child or young person to gain an in-depth understanding of the pre-care experiences of the child from an attachment and trauma informed perspective. Children Always First also see these meetings as an opportunity for the agency to develop its understanding of the child's needs from the perspective of others.

The Agency provides clinical guidance sessions with the agency's Clinical Lead. This is an individual session where carers can talk through any issues they may be experiencing with their children. The consultant will explore these issues from a therapeutic perspective to gain a greater understanding of the child and Foster Carer's experience, and if appropriate will offer therapeutic informed guidance and support for the child and Foster Carer.

Recruitment and Retention Officer

They are the first point of contact for all prospective foster carers upon enquiring with the Agency. Their key responsibilities are to engage with both prospective foster carers and approved foster carers. Upon enquiry they will talk with prospective foster carers, provide information about the Agency, outline fostering requirements and undertake Initial Visits. They are a source of support for all applicants and will remain in contact during the assessment process to ensure there is an ongoing link with the Agency throughout. They also build relationships with all approved foster carers by attending Foster Carer Support Groups, delivering strategies such as Foster Carer of the Month and our Family and Friends Fostering referral scheme.

Education and Learning

Our foster homes promote learning and achievement in every aspect, from attending parents' evenings to visiting prospective universities. Our team provides educational advice and support, and advocates for the child in all educational settings and with the Local Authority.

Health and Well-being

Children Always First ensures that carers and staff prioritise the health and well-being of our children so that children can live in a healthy environment and thrive in every aspect of their health and well-being.

Carer Support Groups and Foster Carer Forums

We aspire for and enable our carers to attend Carer Support Groups and social events as part of their Fostering Agreement with the Agency. These support groups run on a monthly basis. At the support groups, a Supervising Social Worker will attend for a period to provide any updates and then the Foster Carers can meet together to talk and gain peer support with other carers. There are appointed Foster Carer Reps that feedback to the Registered Manager as part of the Foster Carer Forum.

The Foster Carer Forums are more structured and take place on a quarterly basis. This is for the Foster Carer Reps to meet with the Registered Manager and helps to inform the Agency of further improvements and development. This is via the sharing of new ideas, discussion and evaluation of current service provision and feedback from the wider Foster Carer cohort.

Financial Support

Children Always First pays competitive fees and allowances to all of our carers. Carers receive all of their training and carer support group expenses. Because we pay good professional fees we expect our carers to attend all meetings and training in addition to looking after the child/children.

FosterTalk Membership

All approved foster carers with Children Always First receive a FosterTalk membership. This gives Foster Carers access to essential support, advice, benefits, and guidance from a team, including care experienced advisors.

24/7 Support

Carers have out-of-hours access to a member of the Children Always First team weekdays and weekends. Sometimes this may be a chat about a particular issue, or could mean a call out visit from the team member.

Newsletter

Carers and children receive regular newsletters and latest news and information about Children Always First and fostering.

Agency Database

The Agency has invested in an industry relevant database that is used for foster carer and child case files. All foster carers keep daily or weekly recordings on the e-recording system. The Fostering Handbook, including all the Agency up to date policies, is accessible on line. We provide support and training to enable and positively encourage our carers to use IT for enhanced communication, administration tasks and access national organisations help lines and websites for advice, information and support. We prepare and support our carers on issues of e-safety.

“ All support I receive from CAF is excellent. My supervising social worker visits me regularly, anything she can help with or that I need sorting out she does without hesitation. She is always on the other end of the phone when I need her. ”

-(CAF Foster Carer)

12. Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring



Children Always First has embedded a culture of safeguarding within the organisation in line with the Fostering Regulations (regulation 11 and 12). There is a comprehensive suite of Safeguarding Policies in place and Safeguarding practice is threaded through all areas of the Agency.



The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Laurie-Mo Gullachsen who can be contacted directly should you have any Safeguarding concerns.

Quality supervision for staff and carers is provided on a regular basis for full oversight of Quality and Performance across the agency.

Monthly Case Management meetings are undertaken with the Management, Youth Support and Social Work team in attendance. These meetings provide the time to reflect and discuss pertinent situations with children and foster carers. This allows a joint approach to be devised, monitored and reviewed to ensure that the best possible support is provided to our foster carers and children.

In order to maintain high quality social care practice, we run monthly Social Work Practice Meetings. This is protected time, where SSWs and Managers meet together to discuss agency practice within the team with a focus of continued monitoring and improvement.

Regular file audits, including thematic audits, whose topics are informed by discussion between the Registered Manager; staff team and ADM, and performance monitoring is also embedded into day to day practice. We produce an annual fostering report in line with Regulation 35 of the Fostering Regulations. The Agency works to a Quality Improvement Plan that sets the direction of travel for continuously improving services for children and young people.

The Agency utilises the National Minimum Standards to benchmark and guide services as well as qualitative feedback from our carers, children and young people.

13. Complaints

Children Always First has a widely available, straightforward and comprehensive complaints policy, which fully details the complaints procedure that is followed. A child, a parent or carer of a child, a foster carer or anyone else for whom the Agency has agreed to provide a service can make a complaint under this procedure.

Individuals are also able to make complaints on behalf of others if it is considered they have, sufficient interest" to do so.

Children will be encouraged to take up issues in the most appropriate way and they will be supported to do this. If it is possible to identify a way forward with a complaint which is informal and therefore easily resolved, this should be the best way forward.

It is the responsibility of foster carers and Children Always First staff to help children to deal with their complaints sympathetically and actively, whether the complaint is about the agency or the placing authority.

Anyone making a complaint is also able to withdraw their complaint at any stage. The outcome of the complaint is shared with the person making the complaint, with next steps identified should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

If you wish to make a complaint, would like a copy of the Complaints Policy or have any concerns please contact Laurie-Mo Gullachsen, Registered Manager on 01527 917888.

Carers can also contact Ofsted should they have any concerns that they feel cannot be resolved through discussion with the Registered Manager or use of the complaint's procedure. Details of how to contact Ofsted are below.

14. Financial Management

Children Always First has a robust Budget Planning Process in place. Funds are in place to finance the realisation of the plan. These are approved and monitored by the Board, Bank and Chartered Accountant.



Ofsted contact details

Call: 0300 123 1231

For Text phone / Minicom: 0161 618 8524

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

By post: Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD



**CHILDREN
ALWAYS FIRST**
Fostering Agency

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B60 1PH

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Email: Info@childrenalwaysfirst.co.uk

Registered Company Number: 832549
Ofsted Registration Number: SC466934

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