

LAMBETH LOCAL AUTHORITY FOSTERING SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In Compliance with the:
Fostering Service Regulations 2011

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards

Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations
Volume 4: Fostering Services

April 2011

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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives of the Lambeth Local Authority Fostering Services. A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to OFSTED, the government agency that regulates and inspects fostering services.

The Statement of Purpose is available on the Lambeth's internet website at: www.lambeth.gov.uk/fostering. It is routinely made available to foster carers, children looked after and fostering agency partners. It is shared with fostering panel members and staff working in the fostering services.

Printed copies are also available from:

Lambeth Children & Young People Services
Fostering Services- 9th Floor, International House
6 Canterbury Crescent
London, SW9 7QE
Tel: 0207 -926-8503.

The Statement is reviewed regularly and updated annually to include changes in legislation as well as changes and developments in the service.

Aims and Objectives of the service:

Lambeth Fostering Service operates in line with the National Minimum Standards **(NMS)** of the **Care Standards Act 2004, the Fostering Regulations 2011 and the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services**

Lambeth Fostering Service provides services to children, young people and their families and is committed to the following principles:

- Children have a right to have their individual needs recognised and met in foster care,
- Our fostering service strives to provide the best quality of placement, training, support and matching,
- We believe it is important to recognise and promote the individual needs of children, their families and carers and to work with them in a manner which respects their ethnicity, disability, religious and cultural beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age and class,
- We are committed to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice,

- Our children looked after fostering service values the diversity of carers who will meet children's needs, and value the variety of ways in which they do.

In addition, the fostering service works to ensure that we:

1. Generate sufficient enquiries from diverse groups of people interested in Fostering,
2. Process these in a timely manner,
3. Offer a minimum of 2 days preparation training course for prospective foster carers,
4. Encourage and support family and friends carers to attend training and increase the numbers of attendance by offering varied and high quality relevant training,
5. Reduce the number of children placed with independent fostering agencies and invest resources that help to increase placement choices and provide quality in-house carers,
6. Provide foster carers with training that will enable them to meet the needs of the children they care for, including access to professional development training.
7. Provide crèche facilities to support carers to attend training
8. Ensure that all Children Looked After in Lambeth have the same opportunities as other children within the borough.
9. Ensure that all foster carers attend a minimum of at least 3 training courses each year
10. Ensure that all foster carer reviews are carried out within the specified timescale.
11. Increase and support the numbers of carers who can provide placements for children with a disability
12. Increase and support the numbers of Remand Carers who can provide placements to young people to provide Remand Foster homes to minimise young people being placed in custody.
13. Offer an efficient and value for money in-house Contact Supervised Service provision.

Principles of Care

As outlined in the Children Act 1989, the best place for children to be cared for is with their family unless this is not possible. The next best option is for children to be cared for in a similar type of environment, i.e. a family placement.

We believe and support the principle that all children are entitled to have the opportunity to live within a “family” setting and that all children looked after should receive the same quality of care irrespective of their background or circumstances.

Children who are cared for by the local authority in a foster placement should have the same experiences and access to the same opportunities as other children.

We believe that children in Lambeth who are placed with foster carers deserve to be carefully matched with their carers when the placement is first made. Every effort is made to ensure that this is done. Where children in foster care have identified needs that cannot be met in placement, serious consideration is given to what other ways this can be achieved.

Where allegations are made against foster carers, the Lambeth Fostering Service will ensure they are provided with the necessary support and are treated fairly according to the established procedures

The Lambeth Fostering Service values the contribution made by all of its foster carers and work to provide them with the best training, support and careful assessment to enable them to do their job effectively.

The Lambeth Fostering Service strives to operate in an open and accountable way. We believe children should always be given the support and advice they need. We will continue to listen to their views and value their contributions to the development of the service.

Management and staffing structure

The Fostering Service is part of the Specialist Division of Lambeth Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS). The Specialist Resources Service also includes the Adoption and Access to Resources (ART) Teams. The ART service primary role is to arrange placements both in-house and in the independent sector.

The Specialist Resources Service is led by a Head of Service and includes a Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Team, Fostering Assessment Team, Fostering Support Team, Adoption/Post Adoption, Permanency Team and the Access to Resources Team.

Richard Powell – Head of Service - Fostering, Adoption, and Access to Resource Team

Richard has been employed as the Head of Service, responsible for the Fostering, Adoption, Commissioning of Placements and Resources of children's specialist services since in August 2009. Prior to this, he has been employed: as the group manager for resources in Tower Hamlets and group manager for safeguarding and care planning in Bromley. He has held various other management and social work posts in local authority children's services in London and Kent having worked in children's services since December 1987. He holds a BA (Hons) degree in social work, family & child-care studies, Dip/SW, (North London University), postgraduate management qualifications, and commissioning in the 3rd sector from (Bath University). He is currently undertaking a Masters in Business Administration, MBA and is registered with the GSCC

Lorraine Buchanan – Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager

Lorraine is a qualified social worker and is registered with GSCC. She has been working in social care setting since 1986. Lorraine has worked as a Team Manager in the Adult Services and in the Children Services as Team Manager of a Generic Team. Lorraine worked as a Guardian Ad Litem. Thereafter Lorraine became an Independent Reviewing Officer and was in this position for three years prior to joining LB Croydon as the Business Manager of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Lorraine served the community at the Hammersmith Magistrates Court as a Magistrate (chairman) in the Adults Court and consecutively served as a Magistrate at the Family Proceedings Court in Wells Street, London. Lorraine joined London Borough of Lambeth as the Team Manager of Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team in August 2010.

Joan Denton – Fostering Assessment Team Manager

Joan is a qualified Social Worker, and holds a Masters in Public Administration (MPA). Joan is currently completing a MA in Practice Education. Joan has over 20 years experience working within various social work settings within Southwark, Wandsworth, Richmond and Lambeth including Mental Health and HIV, Homelessness, Adults and Children with Learning Difficulties and Physical Disabilities.

Joan worked as a manager within Children Resources working with Children Looked After, Unaccompanied Minors and Children Leaving Care, Asylum Seeking Families and Adults as well as individuals and families with no recourse to Public Funds. For the past three and a half years Joan has worked as

manager within Fostering Services – first within the Long Term Fostering Assessment and Supervising Team and later the Fostering Assessment Team.

Susan Campbell – Fostering Support Team Manager

Susan is a qualified social worker and registered with GCSC. She has 10 years post qualifying experience within a Children & Young People's setting. Susan's experience has predominantly been within the fostering remit, having spent several years in the independent sector. Prior to completing her social work qualification, Susan's worked in a residential setting within the legal framework for Children Looked After. From the latter part of 2002 to 2008 Susan worked predominantly within the private sector in a Fostering remit for an Independent Agency. Susan joined London Borough of Lambeth Fostering Support Team as Team Manager. Susan is currently undertaking a masters training programme.

Bunmi Olowo – Fostering Support Team Deputy Team Manager

Bunmi is a qualified as a social worker from the University of Sussex with a Masters and Diploma in Social Work (MSW) (Dip/SW) in 1997. He obtained the Social Work PQ1 Certificate in 2007. Bunmi has over 10 years social work experience and has worked in Children & Families, Learning Disabilities, Asylum Seekers & Unaccompanied Minors, Child & Adult Mental Health and Fostering. He has also worked in the statutory, voluntary, and private social work sectors.

Bunmi has social work management experience in Children-Looked-After and Asylum Seekers social work teams, and he managed at an 'Action for Children' Assessment & Family Centre, and a private fostering agency.

Harriet Lubega – Access to Resources Team Manager

I have 15 years social post qualifying experience (qualified in 1996) with 11 years management experience. I started as a care manager in Greenwich social services in 1996. In 2001 I came to work for Lambeth managing Lambeth Positive Families Team (HIV in Lambeth). When Lambeth families was merged with CWDT I Co-managed the Children with Disabilities Team until realignment in 2008 when I moved to manage Family Support and Child Protection Team in Lambeth. In October 2009 I moved ART where I am currently managing the team. I hold a Diploma in Applied Social Studies, A diploma in Social Work, a BA in Social Work Studies and a Masters in Public Administration. I am a GSCC Accredited Practice Teacher.

Ozzie Ozuanya – Deputy Team Manager – Access to Resources Team

Ozzie am a qualified social worker, and registered with GSSC. Ozzie has a vast experience in working social care settings. Ozzie started his career with

volunteering at Youth at Risk in 1993 and has worked in a number of different roles including Residential Family Centre Social Worker at Action for Children, Referral & Assessment Social Worker at London Borough of Barnet Children & Families Services, Crisis Team Social Worker at The Catholic Children's Society, Personal Adviser at the London Borough of Waltham Forest Leaving Care Team and Senior Social Worker Essex County Council' Leaving Care Team. Prior to joining to the London Borough of Lambeth Ozzie worked as Assistant Head of Centre, Action for Children Children's Centre. Ozzie joined the London Borough of Lambeth as Deputy Team manger in CYPS Access to Resources Team

Berat Pottinger – Agency Adviser

Berat is a qualified social worker and is registered with GSCC. She also holds following qualifications; BA (Hons) English, Certificate in Advocacy, NVQ Child Care Assessor Award, NVQ Level 5 Management, and CMI Level 7 Strategic Management. She has wide experience in working with children with EBD, learning difficulties and ASD in both residential and fostering settings. She has worked as a Supervising Social Worker and Fostering Team Manager both within an independent and Local Authority setting. Berat has been advising Fostering Panels since 2005 and has been a member of the Independent Review Mechanism London 1 panel since July 2009.

Current Staffing in Fostering Service as comprises:

- 1 Head of Service**
- 6 Team Managers**
- 2 Deputy Team Managers**
- 1 Contact Supervisor Co-ordinator**
- 28 Qualified Social Workers**
- 4 Placement Officers**
- 4 Access to Resources Finance Officers**
- 2 Panel Administration Officers**
- 2 Agency Panel Advisers**
- .5 External Local Authority Checks Officer**
- 3 Administration Officers**
- 1 Training manager**
- 1 Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer**
- 1 Statutory Compliance Officer**

All managers and social workers hold a social work qualification, General Social Care Council (GSCC) registration, post-qualifying training and other relevant experience working with children and families.

The department is committed to post-qualification training and all staff are encouraged to attend internal and external training to develop and refresh their

skills. The staff group has a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience and is continually seeking to develop these to promote service improvement. The staff group is culturally and racially diverse and is reflective of the population that we serve in Lambeth. (An organisational chart attached as Appendix 1)

Services provided

The fostering teams provide a range of services including:

Permanent and long-term foster carers, who make a commitment to care for a child or young person until they reach independence,

Short term foster carers: which include placements where the plan is for a child to return home or move to an alternative permanent placement.

Remand foster carers: who offer placements to young people who have been remanded to the care of the local authority by the courts.

Parent and Child Placements: foster carers are specifically trained to care for a mother and their baby in the foster carer's household. The carers are trained to support the mother in learning how to appropriately parent her child. This would be in accordance with the care plan for the baby. It should be noted that in certain cases both the baby and the mother could be Looked After Child.

Family and friends carers: foster carers approved to look after a specific child or children. These carers are family members or friends who knew a child or children before they became Looked After by Lambeth.

Short Break carers: are being recruited in line with the aiming high agenda to provide respite breaks for children

The fostering staff carry out a range of tasks focusing on the needs of children, these include:

- Advertising and recruitment of prospective foster carers
- Assessment of prospective carers for approval by the fostering panel, including assessments of kinship carers as requested by the courts.
- Consultation with other professionals, foster carers and families regarding the appropriate placements for children plus 'matching' them with carers who can meet their needs
- Family finding for children needing permanent placements
- Support and supervision of foster carers in their work with children, children's families, departmental social workers and other professionals
- Attendance at various professional meetings to help ensure that foster carers are actively supported in carrying out a child's individual care plan

- Developing the skills and confidence of new carers with the assistance and input of experienced foster carers
- Provision of generic support groups
- Remand fostering for young people in the criminal justice system
- Delivery of on-going training for carers and providing support for them to gain the Children Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Award and other professional qualifications.
- Contribute to complaints investigations and allegations made against carers and supporting them appropriately through the process

Every child in a foster placement has an allocated social worker. A planning meeting is held within 72 hours of each placement to ensure that the child's needs are being met in the placement.

Safeguarding

Children and young people living in foster care must be protected from harm and abuse. The assessment of carers can offer some form of protection in the way that carers are vetted but further ways of protecting children are promoted by the Fostering Service.

Training for carers on child protection, safe caring, moving and handling are also promoted.

All looked after children placed in foster care are subject to regular independently chaired statutory reviews in line with the Care Planning Regulations 2011

The following policies are in place to protect children and offer guidelines to foster carers and staff:

- Safe Care Policy
- Child Protection Child in Need Procedures
- Rewards and Sanctions Procedure
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health & Safety

Missing from Care Procedure

All carers have their own individual safe caring policies which are renewed annually. Risk assessments are completed where necessary and reviewed regularly. The Fostering Service has Complaints against Foster Carers Procedure. All complaints are recorded and reviewed in line with procedural guidelines.

Foster carers also have access to the council's complaints procedure. Staff and carers are provided with safeguarding training as part of the ongoing professional training and development programme.

Children's Rights

Lambeth Fostering Service recognises the rights of children and young people and discuss with foster carers the rights of a child.

All young people in foster care have access to a Children's Rights Officer. The Children's Rights Officer provides on going support and advocacy for looked after young people as well as ensuring that they are provided with a copy of the children's guide and the Pledge.

Children's Health

The Fostering Service works to promote the health and development of children and young people living in foster care.

We ensure that health care information for each child is provided to foster carers prior to the child being placed. We ensure that foster carers are made aware of any current health, illness or medication issues relating to children placed.

The Fostering Service also ensures that the carer is given a copy of the child's Initial Health Assessment Action Plan.

Foster carers are provided with information packs which contain information on a range of health care issues.

It is an expectation that all children and young people placed are required to be registered with a GP and dentist, if they are not already registered. Foster carers are made aware of their obligation and responsibility to support children to attend medical, dental and other health care appointments.

The Fostering Service has access to a range of health services including:

Community Nurse for Looked After Children

All children in foster care in Lambeth are allocated to the Community Nurse for Looked After Children who offers direct advice and support to children, carers and relevant professionals to ensure that a child's health needs are met. Adolescents who may refuse to have a statutory medical have the opportunity to meet with the Community Nurse to generally discuss their wellbeing if they prefer.

Child Mental Health for Looked After Children

The Children Looked After Mental health Service (CLAMHS) accepts referrals from either the child's social worker or the carers' support worker. The Fostering Changes Co-Coordinator attached to this service also assists in the development and provides 12 week workshops programme to foster carers to minimise the risk of placement breakdowns. This is in addition to providing consultation to social workers, carers and other professionals to address behavioural concerns.

Promoting Educational Achievement

The Fostering Service prepares and encourages foster carers to promote and support each child's education achievement whilst in placement.

Foster carers are supported through training and ongoing support to provide home environments that stimulate, encourage and value the experience of learning and educational achievements.

Foster parents are consulted and included in the educational plans for the children that they look after. This includes attending Educational Planning Meetings, (PEPS), Education Review Meetings, Parents Evenings and School Open Days.

Lambeth Children and Young People Service (CYPS) provides access and support to learning mentors to support looked after children with education.

Each foster home has been financially supported by the Local Authority to provide a computer in the home for the Looked After Child/young person to use and help with their learning needs.

Preparation for Adulthood

The Fostering Service provides training to foster carers to help develop their skills on how best to help young people prepare for adulthood and independent living. Carers are expected to provide young people with positive life experiences, information, skills and advice that will support them in this objective.

Young people preparing to leave care are referred by their social workers to the CYPS Leaving Care Team where practical advice and support is offered.

Each young person is consulted when the preparation for Pathway Planning is started. Foster carers are also consulted and involved in the process.

Contact with Family and Friends

The Fostering Service through the Access to Resources Team commission Contact Supervision staff that are responsible for supporting contact

arrangements in addition to foster carers supporting family contact. It is important that foster carers are aware of the names and details of the child's network of friends and if appropriate; encouraged to be maintained whilst living with the foster carer where appropriate.

The Fostering Service actively supports, promotes and facilitates the cultivation of safe contact between children, young people and their family and friends. Foster carers also encourage and supported to promote contact and friendships as set out in the child's Care Plan and foster care agreement.

Recruitment of Foster Carers:

When an enquiry is received from a potential foster carer, a basic information pack is sent on the day of the enquiry received, giving details about the different types of fostering and the assessment process. Each enquirer is asked to complete an application form confirming their wish to proceed for assessment. A follow up call is made by the duty social worker if the application form is not returned.

The enquirer receives a telephone call from a social worker in the Recruitment Team upon receiving their application form, and arrangement is made for a home visit. (Please see flowchart in Appendix 2)

Each applicant is expected to give consent for us to undertake the following references and statutory checks:

- Criminal Records Bureau checks (police references are obtained on all members of the household aged 18 and over)
- Medical and health checks (the applicant's doctor will be asked to complete a health assessment report that will be forwarded to the Fostering Panel's medical advisor for review and comment)
- Local authority checks
- Schools and employers checks
- Names of two personal referees
- Details of former partners where relevant
- References from employers where the prospective carer(s) have work with children or other vulnerable groups
- A file review and references if carer(s) were previously approved by another fostering agency

- NSPCC checks
- Housing checks and reports

Information days for potential foster cares are held each month to help them learn more about the fostering task and the assessment and approval process.

Assessment of Foster Carers:

An initial home visit is carried out to each prospective foster carer applicant when after a completed application is received. A social worker from the fostering service Recruitment & Assessment Team will conduct this exercise in line with the “Initial Visits to Fostering Applicants Procedure”. This visit is used to provide applicants with information about fostering, training and support.

Applicants are required to attend Lambeth’s 2-days Skills to Foster training which is held once a month as part of the assessment process.

The fostering service has a procedure in place for the assessment of foster carers that details the process to be followed when assessing potential carers.

It includes the requirement to complete and provide all the information as outlined in the Fostering Regulations 2011, as well as that required by the BAAF Form F1 Competency Based Assessment.

All necessary statutory and personal references are undertaken before the panel date. The social worker carrying out the initial assessment will recommend their findings to the Recruitment Team Manager who will decide whether the application should proceed to the next stage where the full assessment is carried out by a social worker from the Assessment Team. The completed Form F assessment is shared with the applicant who signs the report to verify that they have read and agree with the contents. They are invited to attend the fostering panel.

The Form F assessment process takes 4-5 months, (16 weeks for friends and family carers from date of a child’s placement) on average and every effort is made to ensure there is no avoidable delay. All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file. References from external agencies (Police, LA, Medical) and personal references which are provided in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referee(s). On requests, some of this can be viewed.

Fostering Panel-Approval of Foster Carers

All completed foster carer Form F assessments are presented to the fostering panel for consideration and recommendation. After thorough review of each Form F, the panel will recommend approval, defer the case to request further information, or recommend that an applicant should not be approved. The panel recommendations are communicated verbally to the applicants by the chair on the day of the panel meeting. The panel does not make decision, only recommendations. All panel recommendations are passed to the Agency's Decision Maker- (Divisional Director of Children Specialist Services) who makes the decision whether to approve or not approve an applicant. Agency Decision Maker should make a decision within 7 days of receipt of recommendation and minutes from panel or IRM. Applicant or foster carer receives oral information regarding decision within 2 days and written outcome within 5 working days.

Applicants, who do not agree with the Agency Decision Maker's decision, have 3 options;

- a. accept the qualifying determination; or
- b. make written representations to this fostering service provider; or
- c. apply for the qualifying determination to be reviewed by an independent review panel (IRM).

An information pack is given to prospective foster carers attending panel which outlines the roles, functions and membership of the fostering panel.

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/NR/exeres/3A0BE6F6-FB0F-45C7-9D1A-ACAAAEFE5414.htm>

Matching of children with Foster Carers

A good assessment and clearly detailed referrals are crucial to a successful match between a child and foster carer(s). There is an established procedure in place to be followed in the matching process. The Fostering Service seeks to ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. Other information such as the child's care plan and recent written assessments of the child and their family are used to help make the right matches.

Matches are achieved by means of information sharing and consideration involving all relevant professionals, the child and her/his family and potential carers, their families and other children in placement.

Placement agreement meetings are also used to identify how the placement will meet the identified needs of the child being placed. Where it is identified that there are gaps in meeting an identified need, this is discussed and plans to meet

the need are put in place. Placement decisions consider the child's assessed racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, disability and linguistic needs.

These are matched as closely as possible with the ethnic origin, race, religion, culture and language of the foster family. Whenever possible, a planned introduction between the child and a new foster carer takes place. However, this is not always possible when emergency placements are made.

Family and Friends carers are also assessed using the (BAAF) assessment Form F2. They are offered the two-day preapproval training as part of their professional development and skills training plan. References are undertaken and reports presented to the fostering panel for approval in the same way as those for other carers.

Training provided to Foster Carers:

Lambeth's Fostering Service is committed to providing continuous professional development and training opportunities for foster carers, social workers and other professionals in the Children and Young People Services.

We believe that quality training is an integral part of a fostering career and begins during the assessment process with a two-day 'Skills to Foster' course. Once approved, all new foster carers are expected to complete a minimum of 3 Core Training Programmes each year, which aims to provide the basic skills and information that new carers need to perform their fostering task effectively.

A training programme schedule is revised and sent to foster carers annually. We also encourage foster carers to take part in joint agency training. Any training attended is entered into a training profile that is considered as part of each carer's annual review process and counts towards their professional qualification award.

We encourage and involve foster carers in helping deliver training events. We also offer the 'Training for Trainers' course for those who wish to undertake this task. We believe that this is an important way for carers to learn from each other, promoting partnership working between themselves, social care staff and other professionals.

Every approved foster carer is required to sign a Foster Carer's Agreement. This outlines the contractual relationship and agreement between carers and Lambeth, together with the borough's expectations of the foster carers' role. Supervising social workers attend Children Looked After Reviews and other significant meetings, with the aim of supporting foster carers to implement decisions made in the child's care plan.

Support provided to Foster Carers:

Foster carers receive regular visits from a supervising social worker. Each carer (s) is allocated a supervising social worker. The allocated worker will be aware of the demands of each placement and will be available to offer support via the telephone and home visits. The social worker will also assess the needs of the individual carer and identify whether additional support and training may be required. Recordings are made about each visit or telephone contact using an agreed format.

- 24-hour support

The Lambeth Emergency Duty Team (EDT) offers a service outside of the fostering duty team service should emergency social work input be required out of usual office hours. A duty Supervising Social Worker is available between 5pm to 11pm for Out of Office emergency support and advice.

- Access to therapeutic & counselling support

At times foster carers may require therapeutic support to help with a challenging placement or to deal with personal issues that may arise as a result of their role as foster carers.

The fostering team is committed to providing this additional support when required with professional input from the Lambeth Children Looked After Mental Health Service (CLAMHS) that is available for specific intervention and support.

A Fostering Changes Coordinator Janet Cousins is available within the fostering service to do direct work with foster carers to enable them to have a better understanding of their role and equip them with tools/strategy's to manage difficult/challenging behaviour and minimise the risk of placement breakdown.

- Support groups

Monthly support groups are facilitated by foster carers for foster carer and open to all new as well as established carers. The group provides a range of outings and other social and cultural events.

- Mentoring scheme

Lambeth's mentoring scheme is being developed and aims to provide newly approved carers with support from experienced carers. The initial contact with mentors is in person and after that the mentoring support is conducted by phone.

- Membership of fostering organisations

Foster carers are offered support by their local foster carers group. The Head of Service and Lambeth Foster Care Association (LFCA) committee members meet regularly to discuss service development issues and matters of concern. LFCA also provides independent individual support and advocacy. Twice yearly meetings are held with the Divisional Director of Children's Social Care.

The department provides an annual financial grant support to the Foster Care Association which enables it carry on its' work. Foster carers are also affiliated to the national Fostering Network, through the local authority's membership.

A comprehensive post-approval training programme includes access to Children Workforce Development Council (CWDC) caring for children and young people training courses.

Competitive financial support that reflects the value Lambeth places on foster carers. The level of fostering rates is reviewed annually to ensure that Lambeth attract new and retain existing carers and complies with the fostering regulations 2011.

Carers Supporting Carers (CSC), a new scheme, has been developed to allow carers to assist each other with contact supervision, school runs and child care to enable carers to attend training.

Foster Carers Recordings

Foster carers are provided with a diary each year and are also given a note book for each child in placement. Separate recordings must be made in each book for the child and carer.

Foster Carers are offered training on keeping records, their importance and implications. These issues are also explored in Managing Allegations Training.

Review of Foster Carers

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 requires that the work of carers is reviewed at least once a year. A review can be held at any other time if there has been a significant change in circumstances or if concerns arise.

The review considers the foster carer's previous year of fostering work and makes recommendations regarding training needs and any changes required to approval status that are presented to the fostering panel.

Reviews are normally carried out in the carer's home by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and the allocated supervising social worker. As part of the review process, carers are encouraged to express their views about the fostering service and the work of department in general. A competence-based

model is used in relation to annual reviews and carers are expected to give examples of how they have met the competencies in their practice. Their training and development needs are also identified.

The views of children, their social workers, independent reviewing officers, and the fostering family are sought in the annual review process. Health and safety checks are completed annually and the enhanced CRB and medical references are updated every two years.

The first review is presented to the fostering panel who consider whether to recommend re-approval of each carer.

Number of Foster Carers

As of March 2011, there were **121** approved carers by Lambeth. These included:

89 Regulation 28 carers, including **2** Remand Carers & **7** carers approved for long term placements

32 Family and Friends carers

03 Children with Disability carers

Number of children in placement

As of 31st March 2011, there were 500 children looked after, with 402 children & young people placed with Lambeth foster carers and independent foster carers representing 80.4 % of all children looked after. There were 202 children and young people placed with Lambeth foster carers on the 31st March 2002 which includes some young people aged 18 plus who have remained in foster care to support their stability in education.

Complaints and Outcomes

Lambeth Council has a complaints procedure which sets out the process in relation to the three stages of our complaints investigation process. We aim to resolve complaints at a local level, that is: Stage 1 Informal Problem Solving.

A copy of our Complaints Leaflet is sent to all approved foster carers.

Records of investigations and outcome of complaints are held by the Complaints Department and the information is used for Quality Assurance monitoring and service improvement.

From April 2010 to March 20112, we received **7** complaints in the Fostering Service. Of the total:

- 7 complaint were resolved at Stage One
- 0 complaints were resolved at Stage Two
- 0 complaints went to Stage Three

How to complain, compliment and provide feed about the services

Any service user can make a complaint if they are not satisfied with the service the agency provides. However we encourage service users or customers to try and resolve the matter with the social worker. If the service user is still not satisfied, the formal complaints process offers three stages.

Complaints Manager
Children and Young People's Service
1st Floor, International House
6 Canterbury Crescent,
Brixton, London
SW9 7QE

Tel: 020 7926 6335 or 020 7926 9777

E-mail: cypscomplaints@lambeth.gov.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Adoption, Fostering & Children's Services are inspected and regulated by Ofsted.

Ofsted

National Business Unit
3rd Floor, Royal Exchange Building
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 40 40 40

British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)

Skyline House
Union Street
London, SE1 OLX
Tel: 020-7593-2000

Fostering Network

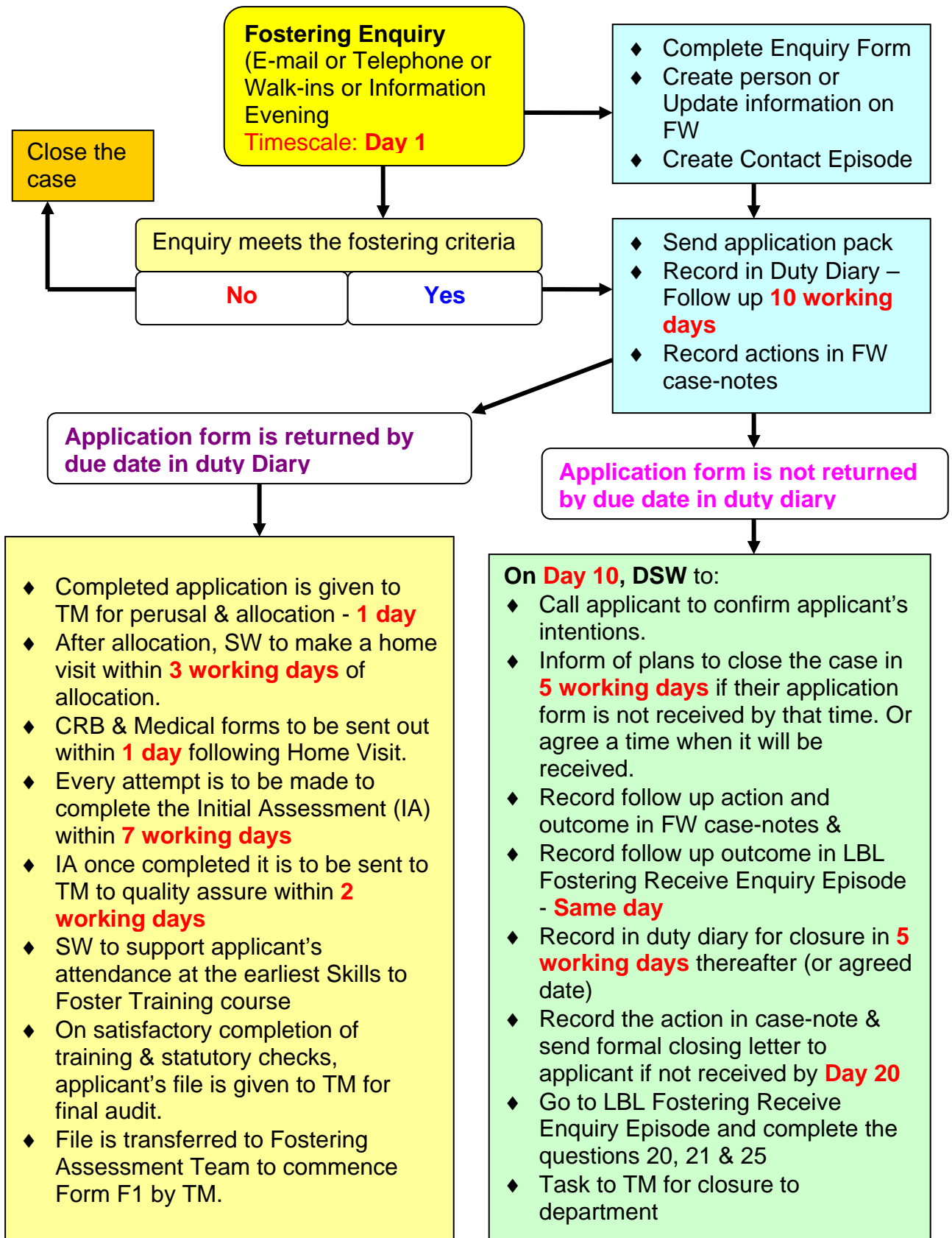
87 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8HA

Phone: 020 7620 6400
Fax: 020 7620 6401
Email: info@fostering.net

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

Dolphin House
54 Coventry Road
Birmingham, B10 0RX
Tel: 0121- 766-8557

Work Flow Process in Recruitment and Assessment Team



This Statement of Purpose can be made available in other languages, in large print braille or on audiotape. Please phone 0800 952 2926 if you need any of these or any other help to access Lambeth Council Services.

**Lambeth Council -Fostering, Adoption & Access to Resources Service
Statement of Purpose- Revised March 2011**

Lambeth Council Fostering Service

9th Floor International House
6 Canterbury Crescent
London SW9 7QE
Tel: 0207-926-8502