

Guiding Children to a Brighter Future!



Statement of Purpose



Sussex Fostering & Children's Services
Cop Hall House
Bay Tree Lane
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6QN



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Status and Constitution

Sussex Fostering and Children's Services (SFCS) is an Independent Fostering Agency. SFCS is a limited Company registered in 2004 and therefore bound by the Company's Act 1985. Prior to 2004 it operated as part of Banya Placement Agency in London; formally known as Banya Eastbourne Family Placement Agency. SFCS is a corporate member of the Fostering Network. There are two active Directors and a Registered Manager who oversees the day-to-day management of the Service.

Premises

Sussex Fostering and Children's Services is based in a 18th Century farmhouse set in its own grounds at Polegate, East Sussex. This semi-rural location provides a relaxed environment, complementing the homely atmosphere of the farmhouse.

The farmhouse has two floors; the upper floor provides staff offices, kitchen and toilets. The ground floor is decorated to provide a child friendly atmosphere. It comprises of activity rooms, contact suite, large meeting room, reception, kitchen and toilets. There is access from the majority of rooms to secure gardens. There is a large car park, which provides ample parking.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to provide an outstanding foster agency that effectively meets the welfare needs of children and young people placed in the care of the Local Authority and that can meet the changing requirements of the Local Authority.

- To work within the framework of the Children Act 2006, the Care Standards Act 2000, and Every Child Matters. To update our policies and procedures as necessary using registered good practice procedures and/ or legislative change.
- To value and respect people irrespective of ethnicity, colour, sexuality, disability, culture or belief system, and encourage every child/young person express his or her identity and to reach their full potential developing whatever skills or talents they may have.
- To work in partnership with the Local Authority to provide a wraparound service that ensures the interests of children and young people in placement remain paramount and, in addition, to provide a high level of stability and to minimise the disruption of placements.
- Our objectives are to; recruit, train, assess, approve and support foster carers to provide homes and care for children referred to our service; retain carers, and carers with specialised knowledge and experience to offer placements for children with diverse backgrounds and for children displaying challenging behaviour, physical or cognitive disability. If possible, match with carers who share their ethnicity, culture or religion.
- To recruit foster carers with specialised knowledge and experience who can offer placements for children/young people who have come from complex backgrounds, and display challenging behaviour.
- To provide a well-trained skilled and supported pool of foster carers and staff and ensure they develop their understanding and knowledge of legislation and trends through supervision and training.

Vision Statement

SFCS have always wanted to retain the child at the centre of their of their vision. The 'personal feel' is central to the service it provides both to the child or young person and to the Local Authorities with which it works. SFCS sums its approach up under the acronym ofCARING.

C	Child centred, flexible , creative approach	SFCS puts the child at the centre of its service. SFCS will look 'outside the box' to find new approaches of working with a child, young person, birth family and/or Local Authority to ensure that whatever services it provides meet the needs of the child or young person and provide best value for the Local Authority.
A	Advocacy	SFCS will enable a child or young person to have a voice. They will seek out appropriate support for the child or young person to enable this to happen.
R	Respect and Integrity	SFCS work in an open, honest and transparent way with families, foster carers, children, young people and other professionals. SFCS pride itself on the integrity of the service it provides.
I	Inclusion	SFCS believe that all children and young people have the right to not be discriminated against because of not only their colour, heritage, religion and needs, but also because they are looked after. SFCS endeavours to ensure that any child or young person placed with their foster carers will be provided with every possible opportunity to reach their potential .
N	Non-judgemental	SFCS use a non-judgemental approach when working with birth families.
G	Good Outcomes	SFCS prides itself on the good outcomes achieved for the children in terms of placement stability, academic achievement and personal development.

Management Structure

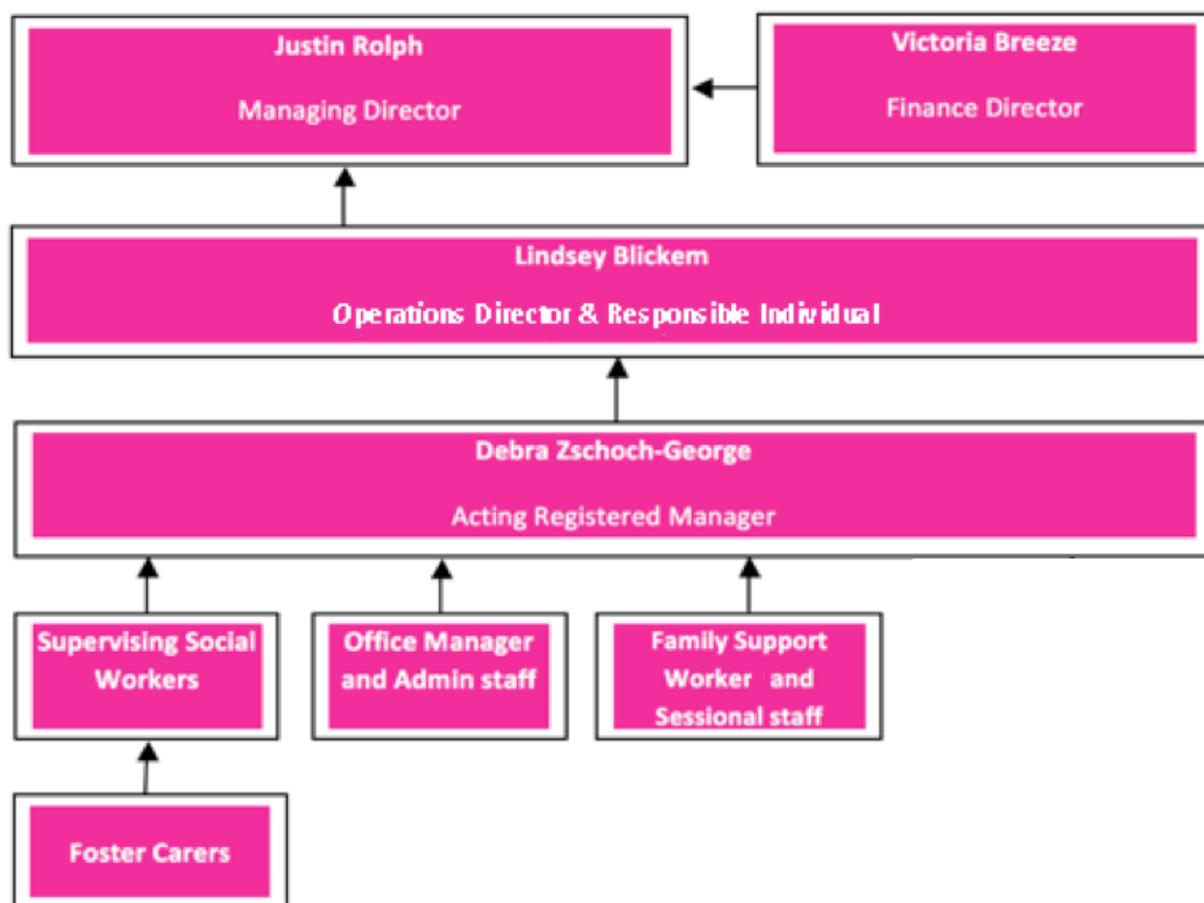
SFCS has a staff team of 9 and we are all directly involved in working with foster carers, birth families, local authority, children and young people. Because of the small staff team, staff not involved in day to day provision are able to deliver a personalised service where the children and young people remain individuals and this is reflected in the service provided to the local authorities.

Each member of staff has a line manager to whom they report and who provides supervision and annual appraisals. The Directors meet regularly with an independent consultant to discuss business development. The Registered Manager is supervised by one of the directors and also attends regular mentoring sessions with an independent consultant.

The Management Team comprises of the directors, the Registered Manager, facilities manager and the office manager. The management team are responsible to the Fostering Panel and, as such, keep the fostering panel informed of significant changes or events within the organisation and within the foster families themselves.

Medical, Health and Safety, Employment, Financial and Legal Advisors support the agency and are regularly consulted for clarification and to ensure the agency is working within the required legislation.

Organisational and Line Management Structure



Sussex Fostering and Children's Services has core staff with the majority of staff employed for between three and nineteen years. All staff receive regular formal supervision, the frequency of which varies depending on their role. Staff involved in practice delivery receive monthly formal supervision. Staff can access informal supervision and support from their line manager or the directors, in their line manager's absence, as and when required.

The fostering team have a monthly team meeting and we hold quarterly agency meetings, that all staff are invited to attend.

Staff training and Cascade Development Training is discussed in supervision. A variety of independent agencies training informs the wider staff team of specialised training. Core training is regularly updated.

Staff have experience of working in a variety of disciplines including Mental Health, Children and Families, Adult Services, Education, Human Resources, Childcare settings and Customer based settings.

Services and Facilities

SFCS offers a range of services, which includes:

Fostering Service

- Emergency, respite, bridging, task centred, pre-adoption and permanency placements;
- Parent and child under 3 assessment placements;
- Specialist placements for children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and/or with specialist medical need;
- Sibling placements,
- A careful matching process which enables foster carer's skills to be matched to the needs of the child/young person, thus minimising the possibility of disruption;
- An allocated supervising social/case worker to each foster family:
- Attendance at meetings to inform the placing authority's social worker or instead of if she/he is unable to attend;
- Liaising with professionals who are involved in the child/young person's care plan;
- Comprehensive reports on a child/young person in placement.
- Educational activities for a child/young person waiting for a school place;
- Play therapy by a qualified play therapist;
- Additional English language tuition for children/young people for whom English is not their first language;
- Activity based programme during the school holidays for children/young people in placement and for the foster carers' children,
- A child friendly contact venue, experienced contact supervisors and comprehensive, typed contact reports;
- Life story, transition, and wishes and feelings work coordinated and supported by the Play Therapist.
- One-to-One direct work sessions for young people about to leave care in order to prepare them for independence.

Family Support Service

- Staff who have a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills of working with families, children and young people.
- Experience of multi-disciplinary working.
- Flexibility to work outside normal office hours.
- Work in the home, community or at an agreed alternative venue.
- One-to-one direct working with children and young people.
- Direct work with families or siblings.
- Experience of group facilitation.
- Delivery of the Incredible Years Parenting Programme
- Transporting children/young people to and from school.
- Parenting Assessments.
- Supporting or assisting a child's attendance in an educational establishment.
- Behaviour Treatment plan.
- Role modelling.
- Life Story, Wishes, and Feelings work.
-

Principles

SFCS operates in the light of the following principles:

- The enduring criterion of “the welfare of the child is paramount”.
- Bespoke services for post-adoption and monitoring;
- Meticulous reflective practice, in addition to realistic and updated procedures, that deliver effective quality assurance.
- A service provision, which is monitored regularly, with careful consideration given to providing the best value to the placing authority.
- The placement engenders a sense of security for a child or young person and develops their sense of self-esteem.

Standards of Care

Sussex Fostering and Children’s Services aspires to follow best practice in care standards, with reference to legislation, regulatory or other guidelines such as Every Child Matters, The Five Outcomes, Guidance on Health and Education taking into account research findings for looked after children and young people.

The Foster Carers

SFCS has an established team of professional foster carers based in East Sussex. We are an inclusive organisation and wholly endorse the principles of the Equality Act 2010.

SFCS has an ongoing recruitment process and they strive to increase the number of foster carers with differing ethnic and cultural heritage to meet the needs of children/young people referred to the agency. SFCS are currently recruiting in Brighton and Hove, Mid and West Sussex. SFCS actively recruits foster carers from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and/or who have diverse skills and are able to provide care to sibling groups, children/young people with a disability or medical need, parent and child under 3 placements or teenagers.

SFCS actively seeks to recruit foster carers who have the ability to provide a warm, nurturing environment and knowledge of child development. Foster carers with specific skills are similarly recruited to provide the best possible outcome for children/young people who have been placed with SFCS. All foster carers are required to have a commitment to training and professional development.

All foster carer applicants are invited to attend a "Skills to Foster" preparation course (assessment is dependent upon them attending the full course). SFCS then appoint a qualified Social Worker to undertake a comprehensive Form F (BAAF) assessment. The Social Worker may be a member of staff or independent of the agency. The assessment is then presented to the Panel for recommendation of approval. After approval, foster carers' skills and experience are thoughtfully matched to the needs of the children / young people referred by local authorities.

On approval, each foster carer receives a Foster Care Handbook, which includes SFCS's policies and procedures. They are required to familiarise themselves with the contents. Any significant changes to policy or procedures are addressed either in supervision or at training or support groups. Foster carers receive updated policies and procedures, which they use to replace ones in the handbook thereby ensuring that their handbook is always up to date.

SFCS have a range of fully approved foster carers. SFCS allocates a supervising social/case worker to each foster family. Foster carers receive monthly formally recorded supervision, but will often receive weekly visits or telephone contact when a child/young person is in placement. This can increase to daily with new placements or with particularly complex cases or with a parent and child under 3 assessment placement. Foster carers can always access the Registered Manager or Directors should their supervising social/case worker be unavailable. In addition to this, Foster Carers are able to access the on call telephone support line for advice, information and practical support outside of office hours.

Training of Foster Carers

SFCS meets its requirements both legislative and in terms of good practice in relation to training and subscribes to the theory of "Ongoing Quality Training equals Quality Provision". Training begins following an applicant's completed application form and a home visit, with an invitation to the Fostering Network accredited 'Skills to Foster' pre-assessment training course and continues throughout the foster carers' career. SFCS has an expectation that foster carers (and their birth children over 14 years of age, if they have the maturity and understanding) take part in ongoing training. Core training such as child protection, safe care and first aid is provided to all foster carers in addition to this specific training to enhance foster carers' personal skills or to inform them about a child/young person's specific needs is offered. SFCS has an ongoing programme of Foster Carers undertaking CWDC training. SFCS believes much can be gained from joint training with other agencies, enabling carers to participate in discussion with and listen to the diverse views of people working in different disciplines. To achieve this SFCS regularly tap into training sessions and lectures provided through:

CAMHS, Health Services, Community Organisations, Train to Gain, Voluntary Organisations, Local Authority, Centre for Emotional Wellbeing.

Children in Placements with the Agency

At present, there are 15 children and young people, placed with SFCS foster carers. The majority of these children have been placed long-term with our carers.

Changes of Placement within the Agency

SFCS seeks to minimise placement changes or placement breakdowns wherever possible. In the majority of cases, this sought-after outcome is achieved and children are only moved from placement for the following reasons:

Working with Local Authorities

Since SFCS was established in 1999 it has worked with have worked with 20 Placing Authorities, including a range London Boroughs. SFCS are currently preferred Providers for East Sussex.

SFCS provides a package of care tailored to the individual child/young person's needs, which may include some of the following services. In many cases, these services are provided without any additional cost to the placing authority.

Contact supervisor and typed report	Transport to and from out of county therapeutic appointments	Educational support both in and out of school
Contact Venue	Transport to and from school	Social education opportunities
Transport to and from out of town/county contact	Support worker working in school	
Support with medical requirements	Life story	Play Therapy
Direct child centred work	Pre- adoption support	Introductory visits
Issued based 1-1 work	Protective behaviour small group work	Counselling
Adoption Support	Role modelling within the family home	

SFCS base its provision of care packages on the assessed need of the child/young person and desire to achieve the best possible outcome for each child/young person. To achieve this, SFCS works closely with local authorities to arrange imaginative packages of care and support tailored to need. SFCS will negotiate funding with the local authority.

Complaints made against the Agency

Complaints against the agency are robustly investigated and resolved at the earliest opportunity. The agency operates a continuous improvement culture and as such we act upon any identified areas for improvements to ensure the highest possible standards of care are provided to the children placed with us. The agency's complaints procedure is available upon request.

Ofsted

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