



FOSTERING NATIONAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & FUNCTION

October 2021

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the way Progress Children's Services (under the umbrella 'Progress') operates as an independent fostering organisation in England.

The statement of purpose will outline our aims and objectives, the services and facilities we provide and how we monitor the outcomes for young people.

The statement of purpose is available to any person upon request and via our website.

Our statement of purpose has been developed to meet the requirements arising from the Fostering Service Regulations (2011) and National Minimum Standards 2011 and all corresponding regulations.



As well as a range of information for a varied audience including:

- Progress Care Solutions staff
- Approved Foster Carers and Prospective Foster Carers
- Children & Young People who are placed with Progress Care Solutions
- Local Authorities who place or are considering placing children and young people with foster carers.
- OFSTED
- Colleagues from other Social Care Agencies and related disciplines including health and education.
- General Public
- Progress Care Solutions Statement of Purpose aims to meet the requirements of:
 - The Care Standards Act 2002
 - Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011
 - The Fostering Services Regulations 2011
 - The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Registered Manager who holds the OFSTED registration in respect of regional information and is overseen by the Regional Operations Manager

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Progress is an Independent Fostering Agency. We aim to achieve positive outcomes for Looked after Children and young people.

Our success is based on our commitment to promoting best practice and ensuring quality care for all the young people placed in our service.

We provide a diverse range of quality foster care placements, and our foster carers are skilled in specific areas. We provide specialist placements for young people with disabilities or additional needs and specialised therapeutic placements. Our carers are highly competent and receive regular training as well as training they have identified that will help them with the care of a young person.

We provide a comprehensive out of hours' support service to our carers recognising that this has a direct bearing on successful placement outcomes.

Progress is committed to providing caring, nurturing homes for children, who are unable to live with their birth families and to ensure they have positive experiences and make progress.

Our vision is to help more children and young people to achieve their personal best by being a high-quality provider of fostering that ensures children and young people have positive experiences and make progress.

OUR VALUES

CARE- We CARE about our services, staff and the people we support - continually improving the quality of care and service delivery.



TRUST- We TRUST that staff will work in partnership in all areas – ensuring we are meeting business objectives, goals and targets.

RESPECT - We RESPECT each other regardless of position and provide peer support to our colleagues by working together.

PROGRESS - We PROGRESS in our development – personally, as a business, for our professional partners and for the people we support.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Provide high quality care in a family environment for children and young people placed in our care.
- To offer foster homes where children feel they belong and have positive experiences and make progress.
- Consult with children and young people in our service to ensure that they are seen and heard with the service.
- Provide a commitment to the ongoing learning and training of foster carers, which includes Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care.
- To ensure that foster carers are prepared and supported to promote children and young people's progress in relation to health, education, emotional and social wellbeing.
- To recruit foster carers who will promote a child's identity – including their culture, religion, and ethnicity – respecting the child's origins in every aspect of the care we provide.
- To ensure that we have foster carers that promote contact when appropriate for the foster child.
- Respect and promote children and young person's sexual orientation, racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs.
- To provide foster homes that guide and teach young people how to keep themselves safe.
- To have foster carers that support young people into independence, at a pace and style that the young person can absorb;
- A priority to ensure that children and young people are matched appropriately with foster carers who can meet their needs.
- To take a collaborative approach to care planning with the responsible authority, supporting the development of an up-to-date and child-focussed care plan for each child, ensuring a clear pathway to permanence is achieved as quickly as possible.
- To work alongside BAAF guidelines and Ofsted regulations.



STATUS & CONSTITUTION

Progress Children's Services is an Independent Fostering Agency. As part of Progress, it has grown organically since being incorporated in June 2000 and operates in Midlands area. It is a registered limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Head Office Company Number: 4014026). The company's memorandum and articles of association are available for inspection at our Head Office.

(Ofsted number- SC036627)

The Chief Executive Officers are Mr Rajinder Dhanoa and Mrs. Balwinder Dhanoa and our Head office is based at Progress House, 127 Millfields Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 6JG.

The Chief Executive Officers and the Managing Director meet with a non-executive board on a quarterly basis to contribute to the strategic development and analyse the performance of the service.

The Senior Leadership Team meets monthly to review:

- The agency's vision and value base
- The strategic direction and goals for the agency and how these can be achieved
- The agency's organisational structure
- The agency's policies and procedures
- The agency's strategic and regional business plans
- Major financial expenditure decisions
- Marketing strategy
- Management Structure of Progress

The Progress management structure is as follows:

- Bal Dhanoa, Chief Executive Officer
- Raj Dhanoa, Chief Executive for Finance
- Claire Rodgers, Managing Director
- Phil Owen, Head of Safeguarding and Agency Decision Maker
- Andrea Edwards, Recruitment Manager
- Harjinder Deo, Finance Manager
- Tracey Briney, HR Business Partner
- Tina Bhardwaj, Operations Manager
- Phil Obrien, Team Manager



RECRUITMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR FOSTER CARERS

Initial Enquiry: On receiving an enquiry from a potential new foster carer, we request basic information whilst completing a form and if they meet the initial set of criteria, we will forward an information pack to provide details about the work of the Agency and becoming a foster carer. An initial telephone interview will take place with the applicant, during which the roles and responsibilities of Foster Caring for Progress Care Solutions will be clearly explained and discussed, and any questions will be answered. A decision is made whether the applicant is suitable to proceed. This is done by our recruiting and assessing social worker.

Initial Visits: An initial visit takes place via a digital meeting of the prospective foster carer(s) by the recruiting and assessing social worker. If this assessment is positive a home visit to undertake a health and safety check will be carried out and an application form will be provided by the assessing and recruiting social worker

The initial visit will assess the motivations, experience and lifestyle of the applicants and include an assessment of the physical environment. The applicants will be required to consent to Progress Care Solutions undertaking further checks and enquiries to determine their suitability to foster. These include:

- DBS checks on all adult members of the family and the household. These involve disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions and other information, which may be held by the Police or Government Agencies relevant to the protection of children.
- Enquiries to Social Services Departments and their Child Protection Registers.
- Enquiries to other Agencies E.g., Probation and NSPCC.

The applicant will be required to sign an agreement for Progress to hold their confidential information on file, which is stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1999 and GDPR legislation.

The initial visit interview should take place as soon as possible after the initial enquiry. This is usually within two weeks of the enquiry.

An initial visit report is completed, and a decision will be made between the Social Worker, the Registered Manager, and the Agency Decision Maker within ten working days, following the visit, whether to proceed to the next stage of the process.

Application Paperwork: If the initial visit is successful then we will then send out the application paperwork and the applicants need to have completed and returned this paperwork within two weeks. This should then be returned to Progress, and this will be taken as confirmation that the applicant wishes to proceed to the next stage.

Form F Assessment: Once the application has been received and confirmed as complete the applicant will then undergo a Form F assessment. The assessment will be completed by an experienced Social Worker. Applicant(s) will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker from Progress or by an independent member of staff.



Training: Whilst you are undergoing the Form F assessment you will be invited to our Skills to Foster preparation training. These are facilitated on regular occasions. Skills to Foster is a mandatory training course, which covers the responsibilities of being a foster carer and working with Progress. All prospective foster carers must attend this training including both applicants where it is joint application. The full three-day course must be completed. We offer weekend and weekday courses.

Medical Check: The applicant(s) is/are required to have a full medical assessment completed by their GP and the report will be made available to our Agency Medical Adviser for comment about the applicant(s) health and any impact this may have on the applicant's fostering potential.

References: The applicant(s) is/are asked to identify six personal referees who are prepared to provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. One of these must be a relative of the applicant and an employer. At least three referees will be selected from those provided, to be interviewed.

The assessment process for consists of two parts. Stage 1 and Stage 2 these stages can be carried out concurrently, but the information required for stage 1 must be sought as soon as possible. Stage 1 checks need to be completed satisfactorily. During stage 1 and for 10 days after its completion, if any of the checks that are received evidences that the applicant is not suitable to foster then the decision will be made by the fostering agency to close the application. The applicant will have no right to a review of this decision by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

Once stage 1 is complete, the fostering service must inform the applicant with 10 working days regarding the decision about whether an applicant has successfully completed stage 1; the applicants will receive confirmation of the completion of stage 1 via letter.

Once in stage 2 of the application, it is determined that an applicant is not suitable to foster the applicant must be informed in writing a brief or full report will be completed, applicants are entitled to seek a review of this determination by the IRM or make representation to the provider.

Panel: All the information collected during the Form F assessment, except for confidential references, is shared with the prospective foster carers prior to being presented to Progress Care Solutions Fostering Panel.

All prospective foster carers are invited to attend Panel with their assessing social worker, where the Form F is presented for consideration of approval of the carers. We aim to present the Form F assessment between 4-6 months, but it can take up to 8 months, from when the assessment is allocated.

The Panel will make their recommendations about the suitability of applicant(s) to be approved as foster carer(s) with Progress. The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendation



from the Fostering Panel and on behalf of the Agency makes the final decision regarding approval.

Panel members are from a wide range of disciplines, including health, education and social care.

The successful applicants are formally notified verbally within 2 days of the decision being made and in writing within 5 working days stating their approval.

All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on electronic file. On request, some of this information can be viewed. References from external agencies and personal references, which are given in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and the relevant referees.

All approved foster carers must sign and agree a foster carer agreement and confidentiality form and provide photographs. Placement of Looked after Children will not be made until Progress has received these documents.

Once approved foster carers are provided with a foster carer handbook which includes all policies and procedures relevant to their professional role as foster carers.

New carers will undergo an induction process for carers to cover administration and information sharing, their expectations and responsibilities and to give them a period in which to begin the role with confidence. Suitable placements are considered for applicants from the point of approval. This information is provided via a workshop presented by the training social worker in the team.

TRAINING

Progress is committed to providing good quality training to ensure our foster carers are equipped with the appropriate skills to meet the evolving challenges of the fostering task. The Agency identifies training as an integral part of our support and professional development of foster carers.

A comprehensive post-approval training and development programme is made available, foster carers are required to attend all mandatory training and maintain ongoing training appropriate to their developmental needs and experience. A personal development plan is discussed and evaluated by the Supervising Social Worker and then assessed at the foster carer's annual review.

Training is provided to:

- Develop foster carers self-confidence and professional competence to fulfil the fostering task to the best of their abilities.
- Improve knowledge, develop and refine skills in childcare.
- Ensure foster carers are competent and confident in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and young people and in protecting them from harm.
- Encourage foster carers to reflect and look at the effects of discrimination in all parts of the community, recognising that they care for children and young people in the wider context of societal values.
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through individual training profiles.



Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care

Progress will ensure that approved foster carers will be supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within 12 months of their approval. Our training programme is currently linked to the National Minimum Standards.

SUPPORT OF FOSTER CARERS

We value the work our foster carers do and the contributions they make too looked after children's lives. It is vitally important to provide appropriate levels of support to foster care families to ensure a successful placement.

Progress provides a creative and flexible package of support to foster carers and the young people in their care. Progress works in partnership with other relevant agencies who contribute to the care provided to looked after children and young people.

The following support to all our foster carers:

- Regular supervision and support from a qualified and suitably experienced supervising social worker.
- Frequent visits and weekly telephone calls from the supervising social worker.
- Support Workers to work alongside foster carer, children and young people on placement.
- Support groups to enable foster carers to meet. Support groups enable foster carers to share their experiences and offer mutual learning. Foster carers are encouraged to take responsibility for becoming actively involved in these.
- Respite nights for all foster carers.
- Organised activities for children and young people in placement.
- Access to out of hours' support service, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.
- Access to specialist support for those caring for children and young people on specialist disability placements.
- We support foster carers to ensure that all children and young people have placement memory boxes and children's guides.
- Access to a comprehensive foster care handbook and detailed foster care policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.
- Annual membership that funded for each fostering household by Progress Children's Services and offers advice including financial advice/discounts, insurance, legal assistance and educational online support. From fostering Network.
- Access to family support worker and inhouse therapist via monthly surgeries.

REVIEWS OF FOSTER CARERS

Progress has a comprehensive procedure in relation to conducting reviews of foster carers, which reflects the National Minimum Fostering Service Standards and Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, Progress clearly sets out situations whereby a review will need to be conducted out of a timescale for example, following an allegation, incident or complaint.



Progress's annual review process focuses on the core competencies that a foster carer must demonstrate and includes an appraisal of training and development needs.

Foster carer's Review are presented to the Progress Fostering Panel for consideration after successfully completing their first year. Thereafter, every three years foster carer reviews are presented to panel as part of a QA process. When a review is not presented to the fostering panel there is an IRO QA meeting.

A Review may be present to external panel following an allegation, incident, or complaint and in circumstances where a change of approval is required. Carer's reviews may also be called to panel outside of these criteria at the discretion of the Operations Manager in consultation with Team Manager for quality assurance purposes. All reviews are signed off by the team manager and then QA meeting takes place adding value of independence and scrutiny of the agency's practice. Our IRO is an experienced social worker who has extensive safeguarding experience and a background of being a LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer.

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS OFFERED

Progress offers a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with approved foster carers. All placements are matched to ensure an appropriate link between the needs of the children and young people and the skills and experiences of the foster carers to meet these needs. Some carers have experience of and or training in specialised areas including the impact of early childhood trauma such as abuse, neglect and disrupted attachments and managing challenging behaviour. All new foster carers at Progress start there learning journey by undertaking the Solihull Approach training which is a basic level of therapeutic training to understand the importance of relationships between children and young people and the trauma they have experienced.

All placements are negotiated through the child or young person's placing authority, either through an individual placement contract, or as part of a wider contract of service provision commissioned by the placing authority.

Short Term Placements: Progress foster carers undertake task-centred work with children and young people and their families where placement duration and outcomes are pre-determined. Foster carers work with children/young people and their families towards reunification or prepare a child/young person for joining a permanent family/adoption or for moving into supported accommodation or independent living.

Long Term Permanent Placements: Many of our foster carers have an interest in providing placements for children, young people and sibling groups on a long term and permanent basis. Such placements usually continue throughout the remainder of a child/young person's care experience until they are prepared for and achieve independence.

Emergency/same day placements: Progress foster carers are able to accept short notice and emergency placements for individual children and young people. Progress will initiate a follow-up process after any emergency placement, to ensure that all information in relation to the child and the intended outcomes of the placement are identified and agreed.



Solo Placements: Progress foster carers are available to take children and young people whose needs are more complex, therefore requiring a higher level of support and supervision, and precluding the placement of any other child or young person within the foster home.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People: Progress foster carers are able to accept children and young people who are deemed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers and where their residency status within the UK is yet to be determined and continual care following this. We have foster carers who specialise in this fostering role.

Speciality Disability Placements: Where a young person has a disability that requires a higher level of supervision, support, or care to manage complex health tasks, Progress offers an experienced, specialist fostering service.

Parent and Child Placements: Placements are available for a parent and their child, where foster carers can provide support to a parent in developing their parenting skills. Due to the specific nature of their role, additional training is required for those foster carers wishing to provide parent and child placements. In such circumstances, foster carers receive additional support. We also provide placements where carers participate in the assessment process working alongside the Local Authority.

The foster carers receive a comprehensive package of support for specialist placements:

This package includes:

- Additional respite care this can include our residential short breaks provision.
- Additional training through level 2 and 3 of our learning and development model
- Enhanced remuneration package
- Family support work support
- Therapeutic consultations with the therapist

This package is in addition to the standard support provided by the Supervising Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker. It is designed to secure placement stability, support the carers, and gain best outcomes for the child, outside of a residential setting.

All placements and packages are individually designed and tailored around the needs of the young person and the carers. Where it is deemed that a young person is not ready to move into a family environment, our residential services can offer short term placements to prepare a young person for this transition, whilst identifying prospective carers, who are included in training and preparation to lay the foundations of a relationship between the child and the identified carer.



SERVICES OFFERED BY PROGRESS

All foster carers have a designated supervising social worker who supervises and supports them.

The responsibilities of supervising social workers include:

- Regular supervision visits to every foster carer to ensure that the child's needs are being met and the care plan is being adhered to
- Frequent contact with foster carers and children in placement through support visits and weekly telephone calls
- Providing guidance and advice to the foster carer in relation to their care of the children and young people
- Actively involved in identifying and placement matching with Progress foster carers
- Participate in the out of hours' support services to foster carers
- Liaise with other professionals who may be involved in the care of the child or young person and contribute to formal care plans
- Identify and help respond to foster carers' training needs
- Contribute to the recruitment training and assessments of Progress foster carers using the competence-based assessment format.
- Facilitate preparation training for prospective applicants
- Maintain careful records of all matters relating to the foster carer and the child/young person placed.

Children's consultation forums: Forum groups are facilitated to enable meaningful contributions towards the development of our service in a fun way.

Children who foster days: Progress recognises that birth children have a significant role to play in fostering. Progress Supervising Social Workers meet with and provide support to birth children.

Therapeutic support: It is our belief that our foster carers need to be prepared and equipped as well as possible by providing specific ongoing training, supervision, and support. This will help carers to not only cope day to day but also provide the kind of care which provides the child or young person with the best chance of recovering from their experiences. The agency therapist is there to support foster carers and train all households therapeutic fostering as they become approved during their level 1 training. She provides specialist therapeutic training, guidance and support where required to enable the Foster Carers to best meet the needs of individual children who may have suffered early childhood trauma, separation and loss and attachment issues. She offers monthly surgeries to the foster carers as well as reflective sessions and training to the fostering team. This along with their social work training and experiences enables us to provide our carers with the best quality support for them to develop the rewarding, fulfilling and complex task of fostering. Foster carers also



receive the same training to ensure they are aware of the need of children with complex developmental trauma.

We cannot erase the often-distressing pasts of the children and young people who come into our care. However, with the right help and support we can provide them with an opportunity to recover, where they can learn to develop trusting relationships, gain self-esteem, experience joy and fun and flourish in all areas of their development.

We can provide carers with the training and guidance for anyone wishing to either support families who need respite, to a full-time fostering role both short- and long-term care.

Direct Therapy- Our therapist can offer direct therapy to children and young people, and this is discussed separately if the LA wish to purchase this support. Our therapist is supported by a clinical supervisor.

Life Story Work: Our Family support worker is trained to undertaking life story work, and this is supported by the therapist. As a result, this allows Progress to provide specialist support work in life story work for children and young people.

The Hub: The Hub' is a combination of dedicated services with the sole aim of creating positive outcomes for young people with disabilities.

STAFFING

- **Operations Manager** We have one registered manager accountable for the whole fostering service.
- **Administration staff:** members of the admin team cover all aspects of the fostering service and work alongside all team members.
- **Social workers:** Progress social workers are experienced social workers, having worked in statutory childcare. They are responsible for visiting foster carer households regularly, attending meetings, spending time with children and young people in placement as appropriate and undertaking all aspects of the fostering role.
- **Team Manager:** The team manager is an experienced social worker who has a strong fostering background. The team manager manages and support the team with day-to-day practice. As well as supervising the family support team and one of the administrators.



- **Student placements:** Two of the experienced supervising social workers support students on placements. The organisation enjoys having students on placement and strongly support students being given opportunities to learn and progress. It also enhances the team, as students bring fresh knowledge and enthusiasm.
- **Corporate and Commercial Team:** The Corporate and Commercial team support the structure of the fostering service to ensure the needs of the Local Authorities are met, that our contracts with LA's are in order, our finance team who pay foster carers and HR will support the holistic overview of the staffing structure in the service. Within this team sits a carer ambassador scheme manager who manages our mentoring program for new foster carers.

This permanent staff complement subdivides as follows:

- Chief Executive Officer 1
- Managing Director 1
- Agency Decision Maker and Head of Safeguarding 1



- Operations Manager/Registered Manager 1
- HR business partner 1
- Finance Manager & Finance Assistants 3
- Placements Team 2
- Team Manager 1
- Supervising Social Workers 5
- Fostering Administrators 3
- Family Support Workers 3
- Therapeutic Development Officer 1

STAFF PROFILES

The Managing Director has over 25 years' experience in the care sector, working with Looked after Children and children with Disabilities. She is professionally qualified holding DIP Management qualification (MCMI), NVQ 4 in Management & Health and social care. Claire has been the key in development and continued success of the children's services provision within Progress and she has established extensive links with local authorities and voluntary organisations. She holds the role of Responsible Individual.

The Head of Safeguarding is Philip Owen, who is a qualified Social Worker and SWE registered. Phil has over 50 years' experience in Social Care with both Children's and Adults services in both the Local Authority and Private sectors. He has held posts at a senior level in both sectors, with considerable experience of managing Residential Services for children, young people and adults with disabilities and complex needs.

The Fostering Operations and Registered Manager, Tina Bhardwaj is a qualified social worker and has been a registered social worker for 16 years of experience within children and families fostering. Tina has considerable experience of working within the private sector of fostering and has built her knowledge and skills in the field. Tina is passionate and committed to providing the best possible outcomes for young people, through continually improving the service we provide.

The Team Manager Phil O'Brien has been a qualified social worker for over 10 years. Phil has experience as both a children's services worker and in fostering services. Phil has worked in both Local Authority settings and in Independent Fostering Agencies as a social worker and as a team manager. Phil works closely with the Operations Manager on service improvement and development

All social work staff are registered individually with the Social Work England) and experienced social workers, whom have considerable post qualifying experience across fieldwork childcare and fostering.

In addition to permanent staff, Progress have staff who work on an independent basis, e.g., Form F Assessors, Sessional Social Workers offering placement support, Independent



Reviewing Officer and Quality Assurance Officer, Independent Panel Members and Agency Medical Advisor.

For all independent staff verification of any formal qualifications is assured, Progress carries out the required checks and enquiries to ensure that the welfare of children and young people. All staff who undertake work for Progress have contracts of employment and job descriptions.

COMPLAINTS & OUTCOMES

Our complaints procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level, i.e. Stage 1 Informal Resolution.

Records of all investigations and outcomes of complaints are held by the Registered Manager and notified to OFSTED in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations.

All children, young people, placing authority social workers and foster carers with Progress have a copy of the agency guidelines and procedures made available to them.

The agency adopts a three-tiered approach to managing complaints as follows:

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

Stage 3 – Investigated by Independent Person and report presented to panel

Any complaints or issues should be passed to the Fostering Manager Tina Bhardwaj on 01902 561066.

OR WRITE TO:

Progress House
127 Millfields Road
Wolverhampton
WV4 6JG

PROGRESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUALITY ASSURANCE



We ensure that best practice is mirrored in our policies and procedures and the delivery of our day-to-day service. Progress Children's Services encourages continuous improvement across all areas of our service at all levels within our organisation.

Our quality assurance ensures we comply with internal and external measures set out within the National Minimum Standards; however, we persistently strive to exceed them and develop new ways of working. At Progress Children's Services, we relentlessly aim to provide the highest level of care for children placed with us; alongside excellent service delivery for foster carers and all our working partners.

HEAD OFFICE

Progress House
127 Millfields Road
Wolverhampton
WV4 6JG

**Updated October 2021
Tina Bhardwaj**

**If you require a full version of this Statement of Purpose please
contact Progress head office.**

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