Fostering Services
Statement of Purpose 2024
Review Date: March 2025
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE - FOSTERING

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This Service is Registered and inspected by Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231

Pilgrims Corner Fostering Service (hereafter called PCFS) provides important information about the registered company and is a requirement under the Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011) and National Minimum Standards for Fostering (2011). It is for anyone who needs to know about our fostering service including:

Any person working for the purpose of PCFS.

Any Foster Parents or prospective Foster Parents of PCFS

Any child placed with a Foster Carer by PCFS

Any parent of children or young people placed with PCFS.

Any Local Authority and /or individuals expressing an interest in the services provided.

The statement will be published on the company web site.

The statement of purpose links with our Children and Young People's Guides.

The document will be reviewed and updated in the following circumstances:

- At least annually
- Any significant changes to the status and constitution of the organisation or services offered.
- Any changes to relevant legislation, regulations, or guidance

Company Information

PCFS is a private limited company which provides accommodation to children and young people and has duties similar to those imposed on local authorities under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Regulations 2011, and the Arrangement for placements of Children (General) Regulations 1991. We also operate within the framework of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England) 2011.

Organisation Details

Office Address:
The Gathering Space
Highland Court Farm
Canterbury
CT45HW
OFFICE HOURS TEL : 01227 370808
OUT OF HOURS TEL: 07523305807

info@pcfs.co.uk
www.pcfs.co.uk

Organisational Structure

Pilgrims Corner Fosting Service is owned by Sarah Norman who herself fostered for many years and was a Director of residential and educational services.

Sarah Norman - Sarah is the Director of PCFS. Sarah has fostered and so fully understands the role and demands that being a foster parent brings. "*We aim to provide the best quality care to children and young people during a difficult time in their life by placing them with quality, highly skilled and trained foster families*". Sarah still plays an active role within PCFS, working very closely with the fostering team and foster parents.

Sue Bartholomew - Sue is a dynamic, experienced, and creative Responsible Individual with 25 years' experience working with children and young people. Sue qualified as Social Worker in July 2007 with experience in adult services and children and family's teams before moving to the independent sector in 2011.

Lucy Castree - Lucy is the Registered Manager at PCFS. Lucy qualified with a BSc Social Work from Cardiff Metropolitan University in 2015. Lucy has worked in Looked after children, Intake and assessment, statutory child protection, and out of hours (EDT) for children and adults. Lucy has been a registered manager for over 4 years.

Foster Parents

PCFS currently has 15 approved Foster Family's. PCFS foster parents are predominantly in Kent.

PCFS also has a pool of therapists, mentors and contact supervisors who all work independently so we can contract their services as and when we need them. They are all subject to safeguarding checks.

Legislative Framework and Standards of Care

PCFS is managed in accordance with the principles outlined in the following:
The Children Act 1989
The Children Act 2004
The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
Human Rights Act 1998
Disability & Equality Act 2010
Care Standards Act 2000
Fostering Service Regulations 2011
National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010

Care Planning, Placement and Case Review & Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013
The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care (2007)
UK National Standards for Foster Care (1999)

Statement of Overall Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of PCFS is to provide stability and continuity for children and young people. By considering the needs of each individual prior to being placed and throughout their stay with one of PCFS families. To ensure that children and young people experience minimal disruption and enhanced stability, including;

- Ensuring children and young people placed with us have a stable and consistent experience of a safe, warm, and caring family life, which enhances and maximises their potential.
- Demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvements, quality assurance and the highest quality provisions.

- Assisting the Local Authorities in improving the wellbeing of children in every aspect of their lives.
- Making high quality matches between children and foster families where the skills and experience of the foster family provides the foundation for the improvement of the
- child's life.
- Strongly supporting and promote social interests and hobbies of children and young people so that they take part in a range of activities and lead an active and healthy
- lifestyle.
- Providing a 24-hour service to foster parents and Local Authorities which is responsive, supportive and professional.
- Regularly consulting with children in care to monitor their wishes and feelings and make improvements, amendments and changes within the service provision where appropriate.
- Providing a diverse training program for foster parents which mirrors the training and development needs of the foster parents in relation to the children and young people.
- Focusing on continuous improvement, quality assurance and high-quality service provision. To continually strive for excellence in all we do.
- Delivering the best value to all stakeholders.

Statement of services provided.

PCFS understands that children and young people present with different needs and complex care requirements. To enable access to the most appropriate provision PCFS offers the following services:

Fostering Placements - All requests for fostering placements are subject to a matching process to ensure that the skills and experience of foster parents meet the needs of each child/ young person placed with them.

PCFS recognises the importance of careful matching for children and young people with foster families. Aligned with The Children Act 1989, The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (NMS). Fostering services must work to achieve positive outcomes for children in placement. PCFS works closely and in partnership with the referring Local Authority to ensure that the proposed placement supports the following key expected outcomes which include:

1. Safety and Protection

Children live in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment.
Safeguarding policies ensure protection from harm, neglect, and abuse.
Allegations or concerns are managed promptly in line with LADO procedures.

2. Physical and Emotional Well-being

Children receive appropriate healthcare, including medical, dental, and mental health support.
Emotional and psychological well-being is promoted through therapeutic support.
Foster parents are trained to support trauma-informed care.

3. Educational Achievement
Children are supported to attend and achieve in school, college, or training.
They receive extra educational support where needed (e.g., tutoring, EHCPs).
Foster parents actively engage with schools and advocate for the child's needs.

4. Stability and Positive Relationships
Placement stability is prioritised to reduce unnecessary moves.
Children develop and maintain positive relationships with foster parents, peers, and family (where appropriate).
Contact with birth family is supported when in the child's best interest.

5. Independence and Life Skills
Older children are prepared for independent living (budgeting, cooking, employment skills).
Transition planning is in place for leaving care or moving to permanent placements.
Opportunities for engagement in society (hobbies, volunteering, part-time work) are provided.

6. Identity and Cultural Awareness
Children's family history, racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds are respected and supported.
Foster parents promote a child's sense of identity and self-esteem including age, disability, faith or belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and language and heritage.
Children have access to resources and support relevant to their background.

7. Voice and Participation
Children are encouraged to express their views and be involved in decisions about their lives.
Advocacy services are available when needed.

Complaints and concerns from children are taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

8. Therapeutic and Emotional Support
PCFS provide or signpost access to therapeutic interventions (e.g., CAMHS, counseling).
Foster parents receive training to support emotional resilience in children.
Behavioural concerns are managed with trauma-informed approaches rather than punitive discipline.

9. Placement Matching and Support

Children are matched with foster parents who can meet their specific needs.
Foster parents receive ongoing training and supervision to support children effectively.
Support services are in place for both foster parents and children to ensure placement success.

10. Legal and Procedural Compliance
PCFS operates within legal and regulatory frameworks.
Reviews and assessments ensure children's needs are being met.
LADO and safeguarding procedures are strictly followed when concerns arise.
These outcomes help ensure that children in foster care experience stability, growth, and positive development despite their challenging circumstances.

Placements Types :

The types of fostering offered at PCFS range from emergency placements to planned placements. The type of fostering provided varies from case to case, depending on the needs of the individual child. PCFS provides a range of placement types as defined by the local authorities which commission the services. These include:

Emergency Placements - This is a placement that is made within 24 hours of it being requested, and where there has been no prior plan. PCFS provides an emergency service for urgent cases such as these.

Short-term fostering & bridging - placements which may be awaiting a more permanent placement such as a long-term foster family. The period of this type of fostering placement could be anything from a few days to weeks or months, whilst plans are made for the future of the child with the relevant Local Authorities or social services departments.

Sibling Placements - are placements where siblings are either placed together or separately with us facilitating and supporting contact between siblings.

Solo Placements - are placements for children and young people who are unable to be placed alongside other children due to their complex needs and/or challenging behaviour.

Respite placements - where foster parents provide a break and additional support for parents where their own support networks are lacking or can be provided to other foster parents as a way of supporting complex needs placements. This could be an overnight stay or a couple of weeks.

Specialist Fostering - provides placements for children who have complex needs and would benefit from a more specialist service or a solo placement with an experienced foster parent. These usually include enhanced packages of support or additionally purchased services and would require careful matching.

Parent & Child Placements- where further assessment is required a to whether a parent is able to manage the needs of their child in a supported environment, PCFS offers parent and child placements - Supporting parents and their child during assessments or when extra help is needed.

Recruitment and Assessment of Foster Parents:

The Process

Stage 1

Registering Interest (Enquiry Record (phone, email, website))

One of the team at PCFS (PCFS) will contact you by phone and get some brief information and if appropriate will arrange a home visit. PCFS will send out an Information Pack about PCFS or bring this with them as part of their home visit. This pack contains information about fostering in general and a copy of the Statement of Purpose enabling you to find out more about PCFS.

The Initial Visit (Initial Visit Form)

All enquirers are visited during the initial stages, and their suitability and motivation to foster is discussed.

These visits are a two-way open and transparent discussion and are conducted by a qualified social worker or manager experienced and skilled in the recruitment of foster parents.

During the visit you will get more information about the process and the level of information that is required before anyone can be approved as a foster parent.

From the outset potential foster parents are actively involved in the process of assisting them in deciding if fostering is right for them.

We are always open about our expectations and how we will support people to achieve these.

Application (Application Pack)

Following the visit, and if appropriate, the potential foster family will be emailed or posted an Application Pack or a pack left with them and asked to complete and submit an application form. The pack also contains a request for permission to undertake all the statutory checks that are required in Stage 1 of the process.

For example, references, (some referees will be visited) Enhanced Police checks (known as DBS), Medical reports, Local Authority checks, current employment references will be undertaken and checks on all members of the household over 16 (there is no cost to you for these checks)

What is Fostering? (sometimes referred to as Skills to Foster)

Prospective foster parents attend an initial 2-day training event called “What is Fostering? – Becoming a family who Fosters”. This is very much a two-way assessment process to determine if fostering is the right career choice for you at this time.

Following attendance, we will inform the prospective foster parents if we will be progressing to Stage 2 or advising why this may not be the case.

Training for foster parents is an ongoing and integral part of the support that will continue throughout your fostering career.

Stage 2

Assessment (FORM F)

To complete your Fostering assessment, you will be introduced to a qualified Independent Social worker (ISW) who will undertake a comprehensive assessment with you and your family. The information gathered will complete the BAAF [FR] (British Association of Adoption and Fostering, Fostering Recruitment form) aka Form F Assessment.
This assessment usually requires the ISW to undertake a minimum of 6 visits (mixture of face to face and online) with you and the family over a period of a few weeks.
This assessment report will cover; individual profiles of the applicants; existing and any previous relationships, children in the household; any adult children living independently, description of family life; valuing diversity, parenting capacity and skills (you do not have to have your own children to become a foster parent) and the your ability to demonstrate how you have or would manage key areas which are known as "Competences".
As prospective foster parents you will have access to all the information and sign the assessment report (Form F) once completed.

STAGE 1 & 2 are often run concurrently.

Panel
PCFS Service has an Independent Panel which is made up of a variety of people with diverse experience in the childcare field. Members include representatives from health, education, therapy, police and foster parents from another organization and some care experienced members. In addition, there are non-voting members: Panel Advisor; Panel Administrator and Panel Medical Advisor. The voting members on the Panel are independent and ensure a positive and robust process and contribution to the approval process.
The Panel, in addition to making a recommendation for approval, has a quality assurance function and provides regular feedback on the development PCFS and the quality of the assessments.

You and the ISW who undertook your assessment attend the Panel and will sometimes be asked questions regarding your application, the assessment and provide more detailed information or clarification if necessary.
Panel will advise you on the day of their recommendation.

Approval (ADM)
Panel then makes a recommendation regarding approval which is then passed to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) with whom the final approval decision rests.
The ADM is a qualified Senior Social Worker.
You will be informed verbally, usually by phone my a member of the PCFS team, once we have received the ADM's decision, and the decision is confirmed in writing within 10 days.

Training and Development

PCFS considers all staff and Foster Parents training as a significant part of the fostering task and use only experienced and highly qualified trainers.

Each year a comprehensive training package is developed to ensure that training is tailored to the needs of Foster Parents to support children and young people in their care, and the program supports continuing and ongoing personal development.

All new applicants attend the pre-approval training course, 'What is Fostering?' Following approval their Supervising Social Worker will complete a Personal Development Plan to help ensure they have the relevant skills and knowledge to support them in their fostering role. Foster parents will be supported to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) within their first year of approval.

In line with the Fostering Regulation 2011 and Minimum Standards 2011 there is an expectation that all Foster Parents attend training regularly and complete all mandatory training within times scales. PCFS requires all primary care to undertake the mandatory training within the first twelve months of their approval, the secondary foster parent or working partner will complete these courses within twenty-four months of approval.

Primary Foster Parents are required to complete a minimum of five courses or workshops per year, secondary foster parents who are working three courses per year.

PCFS provides training using different opportunities and options to support accessibility for all foster parents and their support network.

This list of training courses is not exhaustive and specialised training to support Foster Parents to meet the needs of child and young people is sourced as well.

Pre-Approval Training – 2-day course
'What is Fostering? – Becoming a Family who Fosters' (including Safer Care/Protective Care and Allegation Management and An Introduction to Empathetic, Trauma Informed Parenting.)

Core Training To be completed within 2 years in line with the PCFS training program
Paediatric First Aid: in person - 2-day
GDPR: Online
Equality and Diversity: Online
Safeguarding Level 3: Online
Keeping Good Records/Record keeping and report writing: Online
De-escalation training CPI: in person - 1-day online, 1 -day face to face
Empathetic, Trauma Informed Parenting: in person - 1-day
Health and Safety in the Home: Virtual webinar
Safe Handling and Administration of medication: Online
Fire Safety Awareness: online

TSD Standards: Maximim of 12 months to complete from approval date.

Placement support, Supervision & Additional Services

PCFS Foster Parents can access 24-hour support, 7 days a week, 365 days per year from a qualified and experienced Social Worker.
Weekdays there is always an office-based Social Worker available.

Foster Parents receive support and supervision from their named Supervising Social Worker. This is in the form of regular weekly phone contact and email/text messaging. Home visits for supervision and support take place every month as a minimum, additional visits are needs led.

A minimum of 1 unannounced visit is undertaken between Annual Home Reviews (every 11 months) however, PCFS endeavor to complete at least 2 unannounced visits. All new foster families will have a minimum of one unannounced visit during their first 6 months of their first placement. Peer mentoring support is also available for new and existing foster parents.

Foster Parents provide daily (or weekly in agreement with LASW and PCFS) logs which are signed and emailed to your PCFS SSW. These are read by your SSW and signed and added to the child/young person's file and sent to the child's LASW.

Peer Mentor (Support) groups for all PCFS foster parents are held monthly face to face and via Zoom for conversation and discussions covering a wide range of themes.

If appropriate and within specified packages children and young people placed with PCFS will be supported to access therapeutic support and intervention.

Education

Wherever possible children placed with PCFS will attend mainstream education.

All Foster Parents are expected to promote all forms of education, attending parents evening, concerts, open days etc. Foster Parents are expected to make sure that children and young people have uniform and equipment in line with the children/young person's schools requests. Foster Parents will ensure there is a quiet space for a young person to undertake homework and that they have the necessary equipment to complete this task. Foster Parents are expected to assist with homework and projects.

Foster Parents and PCFS will maintain records of educational attainment, rewards, and attendance to ensure children and young people are achieving their potential and addition to adding to Life Story work.

Health

PCFS views the health needs of children and young people in a holistic sense, from physical needs through to emotional, cultural, mental, and sexual health and well-being. Supervising Social Workers ensure these are monitored and assessed through daily (or weekly) logs, regular supervision, visits to the home and liaison with appropriate health professionals.

Reports detailing this work and identified issues are provided monthly for placing Social Workers and at the child/young person's Child in Care Review. Health matters are also monitored by the Registered Manager and reported quarterly in the PCFS Regulation 35 report for PCFS Directors and for Ofsted.

All health needs of all children and young people are addressed by ensuring they remain registered with their own GP and dental services, opticians etc. where possible. All health assessments checks and immunisations are conducted in line with legislation (Children Act 1989) and recorded in Child/Young Person's health book (H&M – Health & Medication).

PCFS consider that promoting and providing education on health and related issues, e.g., smoking, substance misuse, diet, exercise will not only improve the health of children and young people using our service but will also enhance their self-esteem. Children, Young People and Foster Parents are encouraged to develop a deeper knowledge of health issues through training days, workshops, and information sharing.

PCFS collaborates with mentors and a range of therapists as well as the local CAMHS teams to support mental health well-being.

Contact (Family Time)

Every child has the right to have contact with his/her family and friends, providing this does not affect his/her safety and wellbeing. PCFS seek to ensure contact arrangements, where appropriate, are accurately and clearly detailed in the placement plan. Necessary risk assessments will be undertaken in conjunction with the Local Authority.

Foster Parents are supported to promote contact for all children and young people. PCFS has a pool of trained supervisors.

Preparation for Adulthood

PCFS fully recognises the need to adequately prepare young people in our care for adulthood and independence. Within the care planning process, PCFS uses a range of activities and target setting supporting life skills through an Independence Skills Assessment which considers the young person's ability and learning style and level of development. These are provided to every secondary school age young person to filter into their pathway planning. It is set out in small manageable steps enabling the Young Person, Foster Parent, and the Supervising Social Worker to evidence any gaps in the young person's independent living skills before they are required to live away from the foster home.

Children's Rights

PCFS fully embraces and upholds the rights of children and young people and endeavors to ensure that every child and young person is heard, listened to, valued and protected from harm and provided with a safe family environment.

Every child and young person will be encouraged and supported to develop their full potential, be involved in decision making about their lives and have access to the Children and Young People's designated PCFS 'Say It!' champion for support.

Every child and young person will be cared for by adults who offer respect, nurturing, affection, and experience appropriate to meet their individual needs.

No child or young person will be discriminated against, and each will be supported to receive healthcare to fully meet their needs.

Every child and young person will have access to high quality education as well as access to their family, their friends and anyone else significant in their life.

Every child and young person will be given opportunities to develop skills and interests; will be prepared for life as an adult and will be advised how to complain if they are unhappy or if things go wrong.

More details regarding children's rights are found in the PCFS Children and Young Person's Guides.

Safer Care and Safeguarding

PCFS protect all children and young people living with PCFS families by ensuring all Foster Parents and their household members over the age of sixteen undergo rigorous checks not only pre-approval but continuously throughout their time as a family that fosters.

PCFS ensure every foster family has their own family safer care plan and a personalised identified risk assessment specific to the child or young person placed with them. The young person is part of this process and in the preparation of a risk assessment. These documents are reviewed and amended at a minimum annually or when there are changes within the family or the young person's circumstances.

Health and safety checks are completed annually and reviewed during unannounced visits of which there are at least one per year.

Policies and Procedures

PCFS have a wide range of detailed policies and procedures supported by training to ensure all appropriate safeguards are observed. These include:

Safer Care
Safeguarding
Behaviour management including De-escalation.
Bullying
Absent without permission.
Alcohol and drug misuse/County lines
Internet safety and CEOP
Sexual exploitation and illegal trafficking

Complaints, Allegations and Outcomes

Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and provided to all staff, Foster Parents, Children, Young people, and Local Authorities.

The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring all complaints are recorded in writing along with any action taken and the outcome of any investigation.

Placement Procedures

Referrals for placements are accepted from all Local Authorities by PCFS.
When a referral is received from a Local Authority, PCFS request an extensive range of information:

1. The purpose of the placement
2. Family and Placement history
3. The child's identity/race/culture
4. The Care Plan
5. Time scales
6. The child's wishes and feelings
7. Risk Assessments

In the event of an emergency placement where it is not possible for the referring Local Authority to provide all of the above information at the time of referral they will be asked to provide as much information as is available. If this placement goes ahead, they will be expected to provide any outstanding information within 5 days.

PCFS knows it is particularly important for the service and the Foster Parents to have all of the information about the child or young person and their family to ensure the safe care of every household member and the child or young person.

Matching

Referrals will be considered by the Registered Manager in conjunction with the Supervising Social Worker. Stage one of matching includes:

- Foster parents with the correct approval status; age range, gender, short term, long term etc.
- Those within the location required.
- Consideration of school and transportation
- Contact regularity and transportation.

The second stage of the matching process will consider the child/young person's needs and the proposed foster parents' ability to meet those needs in relation to the following;

1. Identity/race/culture
2. History
3. Behaviour
4. Emotional needs
5. Health
6. Contact
7. Child/Young person's wishes and feelings

Consultation will take place with the proposed Foster Parents. If they are willing to proceed and the Local Authority Social Worker of any other Child in Care living in the home has been informed, the Registered Manager will contact the placing authority. Appropriate paperwork and information will be sent and exchanged.

Placement Process

If possible, introductions and a pre-placement planning meeting should be held to establish a clear Placement Plan and agreement. This involves sharing all of the information available and agreeing the content of the Placement Plan/Agreement. Delegated Authority should be set out and medical consent from the placing authority or a parent with parental responsibility given to the Foster Parents.

Education provision, health needs and regularity of visits by the Placing Authority's Social Worker should be clearly documented along with arrangements for contact.

Where it is not possible to hold a pre-placement meeting; for example, if the child or young person is placed in an emergency, a planning meeting must be held within five days of the placement being made.

Ending Placements

Placements will not be ended by the PCFS for reasons other than:

- The end of the placement is within the child's Care and Placement Plan or Pathway Plan.
- To protect the child or young person.
- To protect members of the household.

In an emergency where other or more suitable arrangements to maintain the placement cannot be made.

If the Placing Authority is proposing to end the placement for reasons other than those stated above, PCFS will inform the child/young person's Independent Reviewing Officer.

Whenever a placement move is considered the wishes and feelings of the child/young person will be sought. Where their wishes and feelings are not being observed the reasons for this must be explained to them. The Placing Authority should not move a placement until the child/young person has had an opportunity to express their view.

If a move to another foster parent within PCFS is being considered, this will be treated as a new placement move with the same level of matching required.

Where young people are reaching their 18th birthday consideration will be given to continuing the placement under a Staying Put arrangement if it is in their best interest.

Foster Parents are encouraged wherever possible to maintain contact with children and young people who have moved on.

Recruitment of Staff

PCFS implement a robust Safeguarding Policy and procedures regarding recruitment through:

- Application forms and interviews
- Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Checks
- Reference checks from previous employers
- Right to work and Identity checks
- Social Work England registration for Social Workers

This document has been read and approved by the Responsible Individual.

Sign: 

Print: Sue Bartholomew

Date: 28.01.2026