

North Tyneside Council

Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose

1. Introduction

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (made under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Standards Act 2000) require that all Fostering Service providers must compile a written statement in relation to the fostering service ("the statement of purpose"). This document will be made available upon request for inspection by:

- any person working for the purposes of the Fostering and Service.
- any Foster Carer or prospective Foster Carer of the Fostering Service.
- any child/young person placed with a Foster Carer by the Fostering Service.
- the parent of any such child/young person.

The Fostering Service provider must ensure that the Fostering Service is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose and in ensuring Regulation 5 is complied with this Statement of Purpose will be reviewed, updated and modified whenever necessary, but not less than annually.

Within 28 days of any amendment the Fostering Statement of Purpose must be sent to the Chief Inspector of OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) and published on the provider's website.

2. Overall Aim

The overall Aim of the Fostering Service is:

To safeguard and promote the welfare, safety and individual needs of looked after children through the provision of a high quality Fostering Service, where the child's educational achievement is promoted, health needs met and through the council fulfilling its corporate parenting responsibilities each looked after child is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

In meeting the overall aim, the Fostering Service will work in partnership with the child's network, elected members and other interested parties to offer a variety of placement options and the best possible alternative family-based care, to meet the individual needs of children.

3. Our Aim

In discharging our responsibilities, the following values will underpin and inform our practice:

- The Child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care.

- Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent corporate parenting and the best education opportunities; enjoying a wide range of activities to develop their talents and skills.
- Children are entitled to grow up in a loving environment that can meet their developmental needs.
- Every child should have his or her wishes and feelings listened to and considered.
- Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.
- The needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and considered.
- The significance of family time for looked after children and of maintaining relationships and networks with birth parents and the wider family, including siblings and grandparents is recognised, as is the foster carer's role in this.
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own children and to have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.
- The importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the child's network.
- Foster carers have a right to full information about the child.
- It is essential that foster carers receive relevant support services and development opportunities in order to provide the best care for children.
- Genuine partnership between all those involved in fostering children is essential to deliver the best outcomes for children.

In addition to the above we aim to ensure that the content and spirit of North Tyneside Council's Foster Carers Charter updated on the 31st November 2019 is embedded in service delivery and in doing so our foster carers will be engaged, supported and fully consulted at every stage of a child's placement with them, so they can do their best for each and every child in their care.

We seek to attract carers who are emotionally warm and capable, along with their families, of meeting the needs of children in care. We are keen to incorporate new ideas and evidence-based practice into our work in a way that enhances our performance and helps to achieve positive outcomes for children. We actively seek to develop the skill base of our managers and practitioners and encourage active participation in the shaping of the Fostering aspects of the service. We actively strive to ensure that there is placement choice to address children's needs. All our work is and will be undertaken with the needs of children as our primary focus. All our work will be anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive. Where we do not meet standards, which are prescribed, for example by the Care Standards Act, or by our own agency, we are committed to learning from this and

developing our individual and collective practice to meet these. We are also mindful of the need to meet the Equality Standards as prescribed for Local Government. By undertaking the Equality Impact Assessment, we can ensure that the service we provide is based on consistency and flexibility to offer choice and responsiveness to different cultural, religious and gender-based needs.

Our aims will be pursued and met through the following objectives:

- (i) To continue to recruit and retain a sufficient number and range of skilled Foster Carers to meet the current and predicted demands of the children in care population to enable choice for each child requiring foster care.
- (ii) The effective matching of the child to the carer skills and experience, to enable the full range of the child's needs to be met.
- (iii) To involve and take into account, foster carer's views in relation to developments in Children's Services provision.
- (iv) Actively promote anti-discriminatory practices with foster carers and service users.
- (v) To continue to monitor the usefulness of systems for gathering the views of children and young people and their families which will be used to inform quality assurance and future development within the fostering aspects of the service. Special consideration will be given to the child's own wishes and feelings, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background, religious persuasion and personal qualities.
- (vi) Adhere to the principles of Data Protection (GDPR) and Freedom of Information and continue professional practice in managing confidential information.

4. Services and Facilities Provided

North Tyneside Council's Foster Carers are paid a fee in line with the skills to Foster framework. All foster carers are set within a band linked to their demonstrated skill and training completed which is reviewed annually at their foster care review.

All foster carers receive allowances, which in line with the recommended national minimum allowances published by Government. The allowances are for the everyday expense of looking after a child or young person. The financial support available to all foster carers is contained in one document and all foster carers have a copy. This is re-circulated to every carer after any amendments and contained along with all policies and procedures on the fostering portal.

5. Care Placements

When matching a child with a foster carer at the beginning of the child's care journey all of the available information is used to determine the which skill band and then which carer within that, is likely to meet the child's needs. It is acknowledged that this can vary once a child is in care and more information becomes available.

Short Term Foster Care would be appropriate in such instances where assessments need to be completed to help decide if it is safe for a child to return home. Often the time scale for this can be set by the court and therefore the time in short term foster care can vary considerably. The fostering service supports concurrency in care planning and foster

to adopt placements for children who may have an adoption plan as the outcome of assessments. Foster to adopt foster carers are also approved as adopters and this type of placement improves placement stability and outcomes for the child as he or she has had the opportunity to develop attachments with the adults and family members who subsequently become their adoptive parents & family.

Long Term Foster Carers are approved to offer a permanent alternative home for a child who is unable to live with their birth family and where adoption is not in the child's best interest. These foster carers are matched to particular children.

Relative, Friend or Other Connected Persons Foster Carers refer to the approval of adults known to the child. This can be a family member, family friend or a person connected to the child for example a health or education professional. Their approval is for specific children.

Short Break Care is a service offered to short term carers for planned breaks due to the needs of a child and/or the fostering family, this is available to families who have a child with a disability to provide a planned short break.

Staying Put. When a young person who has been in the care of the Local Authority approaches the age of 18, foster carers are encouraged and supported to continue with the care as long as the young person wants to continue to stay and this is meeting their needs. These arrangements are financially supported until the young people are 21.

6. Support Services

Social Work

Children's statutory social work teams are organised as follows: a Multi-Agency Assessment Hub (MASH) that deals with all initial referrals to the service for children.

Six children's social work teams (Safe and Supported) who work with Children in Need, children subject to Child Protection Plans, children who are subject to Care Proceedings and children in care.

A Children's Disability Team provides social work support for children and young people aged 0-18 years who have severe learning disabilities or a life limiting condition.

The Care Leavers Team

A representative from the care leavers team attends the young person's Looked After review prior to their sixteenth birthday and case responsibility transfers once they are eighteen. The care leavers team work closely together with the safe and supported teams to ensure that this transition is completed as sensitively and timely as possible. The care leavers team are experienced in providing support and help for children leaving care with continued education and/or employment, training and the move to adulthood and a home of their own.

Education

Specialist educational advice and support is available to foster carers and staff working with children in care via our Virtual School for Looked After Children. Each child in care

has a personal education plan (PEP) to ensure effective co-ordination/planning for his/her education.

Health

Specialist psychological advice and support is provided via our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Work is undertaken with individual children and young people and is also available for consultation and support to foster carers.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) enables the service to monitor the emotional well-being of children in care and the impact of the services in place to strengthen the emotional resilience of children in care. Alongside this we are piloting a range of different assessments and tools around emotional wellbeing and mental health as part of a national initiative.

Specialist medical advice is available through the Specialist Doctor (Child Health) who acts as Medical Adviser/Panel Member for the Fostering Service. The RHELAC Team, which includes representatives from health and education, actively promotes working relationships with foster carers.

Clinical Psychology brings an additional perspective to children in care services through direct and indirect work with the child, foster carers, and other professionals in order to aide early identification of mental health issues and improve outcomes in this area.

Through the RHELAC Team the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children who is available to advise/support professionals and foster carers, as well as working directly with young people around any health issues. The nurse and designated doctor work together with other members of the health team to improve health outcomes for children in care. The team also provides counseling services to children in care and their foster carers

Each child in care is offered, as a minimum, an annual health assessment to ensure his/her health needs are managed.

Elected Members

The Corporate Parenting Forum meets quarterly. It is chaired by the lead Cabinet Member for children. It oversees and scrutinises a range of services for children in care and provides a yearly report to members on the position of children in care in North Tyneside. This forum receives the 3 monthly reports on the fostering service.

Participation

The Participation and Advocacy Team provides children in care with group forums to raise issues, influence the shape of services and develop practice borough wide. This team organise a yearly consultation of the views of children in care and the feedback received influences service development. All children in care with foster carers aged 8+ are encouraged to join the Children in Care Council. In addition, the team provides an Advocacy Service to all children in care and care leavers. This service supports good quality social work in helping children and young people to voice their wishes and feelings during decision making processes.

Supervision Visits

Each foster carer is allocated a named supervising social worker from the Fostering Service. The frequency of supervision visits is no less than 6 weekly; however frequency is negotiated between the foster carer and the supervising social worker recognising the needs and issues in the home, it can be at a greater level.

Out of Hours

The out of hours support for foster carers is provided by Fostering Service social workers. This telephone support is available outside of office hours and therefore ensures any foster carer can contact a Fostering Service social worker 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

North Tyneside Fostering Network Committee

Foster carer representation is supported through the North Tyneside Fostering Network Committee, which is a foster carer representative group. The group comprises foster carers and representatives from the fostering and children's social work service. Foster carers can influence the development of service provision through this forum. Minutes of meetings of the North Tyneside Fostering Network Committee are sent to all foster carers after each meeting. The Committee organises social activities including trips and parties for the fostering family and children in care.

A liaison group from the committee meets regularly with the Team Managers, Fostering Service and Senior Managers in children's services.

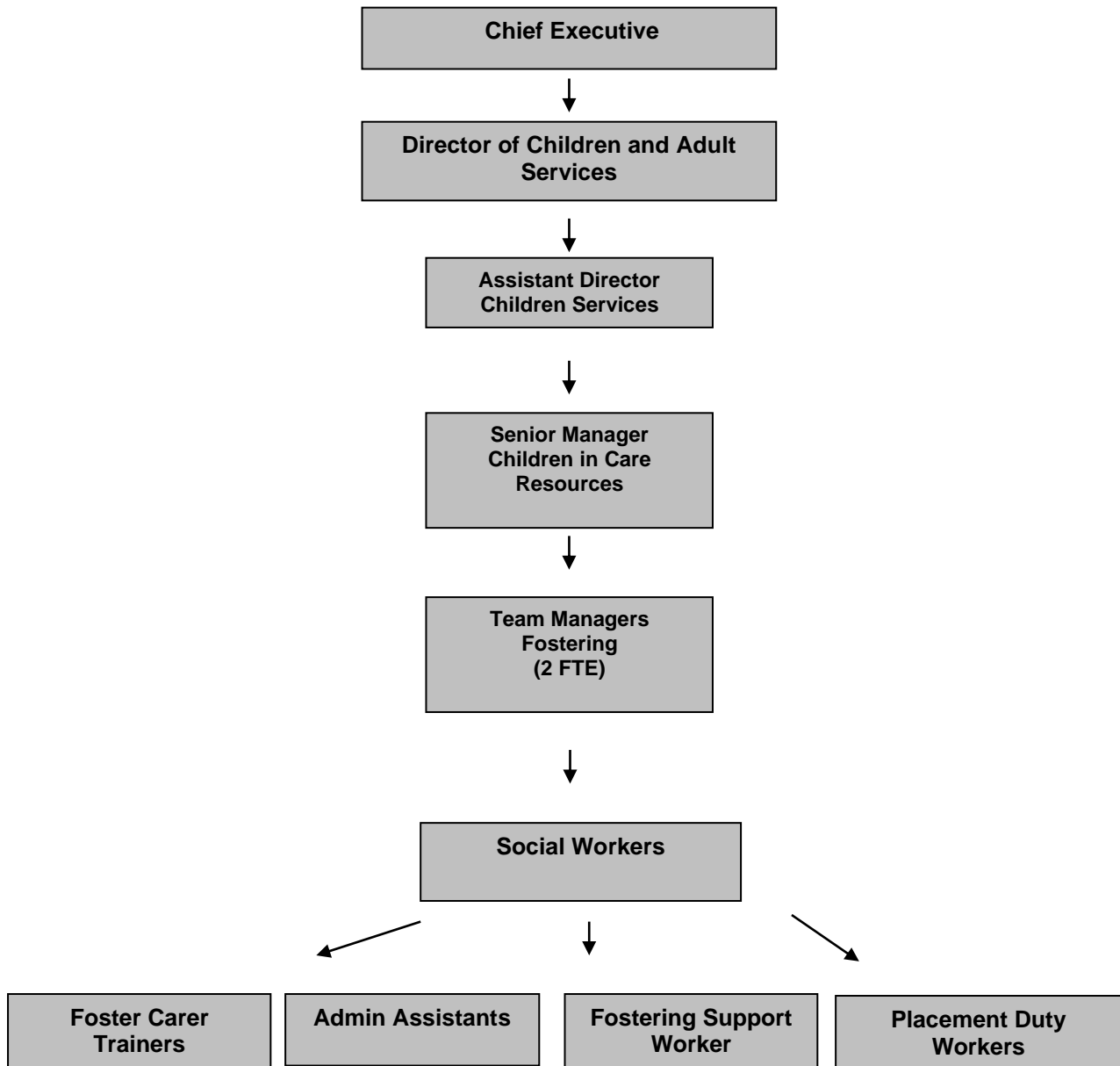
Support Groups

The Fostering Service currently offers a range of support groups to our foster carers. The agendas are a mix of peer support and socialising.

The children who foster also have a support group which run in school holidays, which follows a similar agenda to the adult groups.

7. Management Structure

The Senior Manager Children in Care Resources has managerial responsibility for the fostering and service and is supported by 2 team managers who are responsible for the supervision of staff and service development. The Assistant Director children's services manages the Senior Manager.



8. Numbers, relevant qualifications and experience of staff

	Qualifications	Experience
Team Manager	Diploma in Social Work 2005 BSC Specialist Social Work with children , young people and their carers 2010	2005, Social Worker in a Family Support Team and Safeguarding Team 2009, Senior Social Worker, Safeguarding 2011, Social Worker, Adoption Team 2017, Senior Social Worker, Adoption Team 2018, Team Manager, Fostering Team
Team Manager	2011, CASHE Level 3 in Childcare and Education 2014, BSC Hons in Social Work	2014, Social Worker, Fostering and Adoption Team 2017, Senior Social Worker, Adoption Team 2018, Team Manager, Fostering Team
Social Worker (Full Time)	Diploma in Health and Social Welfare Diploma in Social Work Diploma in HE Level 3 SW (Child Protection k/wkr)	1988 Residential Worker + Family Centre work 1993 Social Work Assistant (Child Care) 1995 Trainee Social Worker 1997 Social Worker (Child Protection) 2002 Social Worker (Families, Scotland) 2005 Chrysalis Project Social Worker 2007 North Tyneside Fostering Service NTC Fostering & Adoption Service
Social Worker (Full Time)	Certificate in Education Certificate in Social Care CSS Practice Teachers Award	1985 Residential Social Worker 1994 North Tyneside Family Placement Team 2003 North Tyneside Fostering Service NTC Fostering & Adoption Service
Social Worker (Full Time)	Btech National Social Care CQSW and Dip/HE Social Work PQ1 PQCCA Bsc Child Care Social Work	1989-94 Various placements and voluntary roles in social care alongside training. 1994-2002 Social Worker in children and families fieldwork duty team and long term team. 2002-2005 Supervising Social Worker Fostering Service – Newcastle. 2005-2006 Deputy Manager Fostering Service – Newcastle. 2006-2008 Acting Team Manager Fostering Service - Newcastle 2010-2012 Social Worker Adoption – North Tyneside Council 2012 Transfer to Fostering Service with responsibility for Connected Persons Foster Carers. 2018 NTC Fostering Service Social Worker and Training Coordinator
Full Time Social worker	2009, SC in Criminology and Sociology.	2010, Support worker 2012 -2014, Support Worker, Children

	2014, Masters in Social Worker 2018, Post Qualifying Award Level 1 Working towards Post Qualifying Award Level 2/ Practice Educator	with disabilities 2014 Victim Support worker 2014, Social Worker North Tyneside 2019, Social Worker, Fostering Team
Full Time Social worker	2016, SW Degree BSC Hons	2016 – May 18 – SW Safer Supported May 18 -Fostering
Part Time Social worker	1990, CQSW 1997, Diploma in social work 1998, MA In child Protection	1990-99 – social worker, child protection 1999-2001- Practitioner for children with disabilities 1991-1995 – IRD 1995 – 2016 Manager Child Protection 2016 – 2017 – Manager Fostering 2017 – Social worker, Emergency Duty Team, North Tyneside 2018 Social Worker, North Tyneside Fostering Team
Full Time Social worker	1991, CQSW 2004, Post Qualifying Award	1992, Social Worker 2000, social Worker Fostering and Adoption Service
Part Time Social worker	2006 – 2009 BA hons Professional Practice and Childhood Studies 2009 – 2010 PQCE in Early Years 2018 – Post Graduate Diploma in social work	2010 – 2017 Early Years Educator 2019 – Social Worker, Fostering Service
Full Time – Social worker	2011, BSC Criminology 2012, Master's in social research 2016, Masters in SW	2015 – March 17 - Disability Support Worker March 17 – June 19, Social Worker in Durham June 2019, Social Worker, Fostering
Full Time – Social worker	2016, Undergraduate Degree in Social Work 2019, Post Qualifying Award	1999, Support Worker (Mental Health) 2006 – 2016, Domestic Violence Support Worker 2016 – 2019, Social Worker, North Tyneside June 2019, Social Worker, Fostering Team
Full Time – Placement Duty Worker	BTEC in Computer Studies Yr 1 HNC Housing Management CLAIT	1990 Office Junior 1995 Letting Negotiator 1997 Sales Negotiator/Lettings 1999 Customer Service Asst

	ECDL ECDL Advanced Word ECDL Advanced Excel Elementary Bookkeeping APTT Teaching Adults Level 3 NVQ Level 2 Business and Admin NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Business and Admin Level 2 Functional Skills Maths Level 2 Functional Skills ICT Level 2 Functional Skills English	2000 Investment Clerk 2003 Asst Centre Coordinator 2007 Administrative Assistant, Fostering & Adoption. 2011 Administrative Assistant, Fostering & Adoption. NTC Fostering & Adoption Service – Placement Duty Worker
Full Time – Placement Duty Worker	2000 – Business Admin NVQ Level 2 and 3 2003, HND Business Management 2009, ICT NVQ Level 2 2011 – Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3 NVQ 2017 – Btec Diploma – Customer Service L3	2002 – 2007 Out Patients Receptionist. 2007 – 2014 Resources / Admin Assistant 2014 – 2015 Learning Support Assistant 2015 –2019, Early Life Admin Officer 2019 – Placement Duty Worker, Fostering Service
Full Time – Admin Assistant	NCFE Shorthand III 70 wpm RSA Stage II Typewriting RSA Stage I Word Processing CLAIT Stage I IBT Stage II City & Guilds Numeracy Level 2 Teaching Assistant Level 2	1985 Office Junior, NTC Engineers Dept. 1988 Receptionist/Secretary, NTC Camperdown Adult Training Centre 1990 Word Processing Operator, NTC Members Services 2001 Snr Word Processing Operator, NTC Legal & Democratic Services 2006 Administrative Assistant, Fostering 2011 Administrative Assistant, Fostering & Adoption NTC Fostering & Adoption Service Admin Assistant
Part Time – Admin Assistant	GOAL Level 2 NVQ in administration OCR Level 2 in Text Processing Word Processing (Intermediate) OCR Certificate in Effective Communication Certificate of achievement for completing EDRMS Excel	1999 North Tyneside Children Services (Safeguarding Team) 2016 NTC Fostering & Adoption Service
Full Time – Admin assistant	2019 - ICT L1 2019 - Maths L1 Still Studying to reach L2	2018 – 2019 Business Administration School Improvement Services

	English Language L1 Still Studying to reach L2 English Literature L1 Still Studying to reach L2 Film Studies C Art and Design 5 Business Admin Apprenticeship L2	2019 – Fostering Services Business Admin
Full time – social worker	September 2015 – August 2018 – Northumbria University. Bachelor of Science (Hons) Social Worker with Second Class Honours (Upper Division)	May 2019 – North Tyneside Council Fostering Service
Part Time – social worker	MA Social Work: 2006-2008 Durham University BSc Psychology: 2:2 Sunderland University 2001 PQ & Consolidation Northumbria University Advanced Diploma Psychotherapeutic Counselling EMDR Practitioner Certificate in Training Practice (CIPD)	2003-2006, Senior Practitioner-Volunteer Coordinator The Children's Society 2007-2009, Family Intervention Project (FIP) Worker 2009- 2013, Family Intervention Project (FIP) Manager 2013- 2016, Adoption Support Social Worker 2016- present, Therapeutic Social Worker & EMDR Therapist 2018, Social Worker, North Tyneside Fostering Team 2019, Trainer/recruiter
Full time - Fostering Support Worker	Level 5 Diploma Health and Social Care – 2014 - 2016 NVQ level 3 Health and Social Care 2007 - 2009 NVQ2 Business Admin 2002- 2003	Social Care Assistant – 2003- 2018 Fostering Placement Support worker 2018- to date

The Fostering Service has a business continuity procedure, to enable the activities and responsibilities of the service to be continued should a business continuity emergency, event, incident and/or crisis arise.

9. Numbers of Foster Carers (on 31/10/19)

Type of Resource

Mainstream (Short Term/Long Term)
Relative, Friend or Other Connected Person
Total

Number of Foster Carers

110

80

190

10. Numbers of children placed (on 31/10/19)

Type of Resource	Number of Children placed
Mainstream	149
Relative, Friend or Other Connected Person	77
Short Break	0
Staying Put	30
Total	256

11. Complaints and their Outcomes

All complaints relating to the fostering service are responded to by rigorous adherence to the North Tyneside Council complaints procedure and that the complaint and the outcome are noted and held by the service to drive improvements.

We actively promote the right for any foster carer to have a discussion with any manager from Children's Services on any issue which affects their role and functioning as a foster carer for North Tyneside Council. This is available outside of the formal complaints policy.

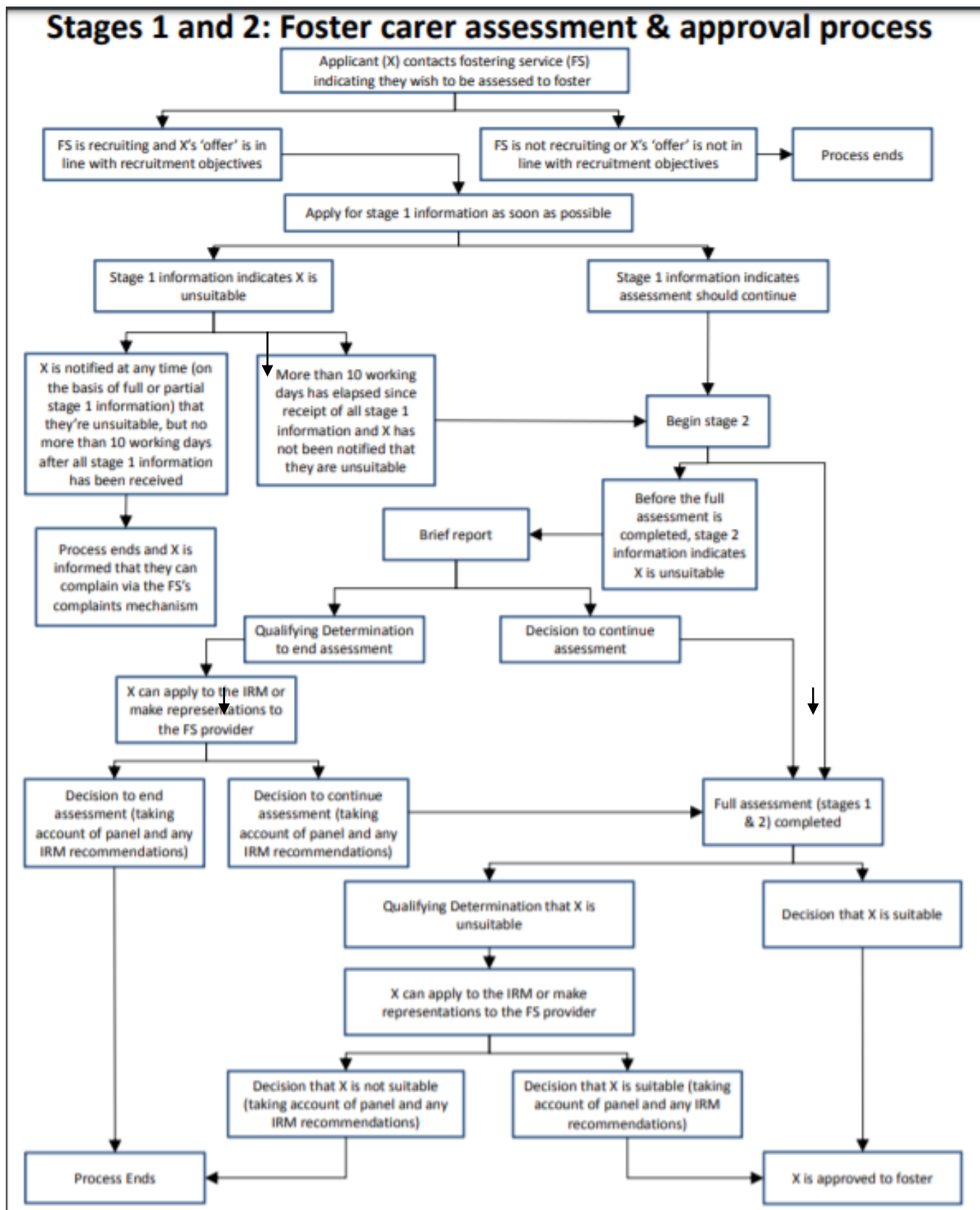
Independent support for foster carers facing complaints and allegations is commissioned from an Independent Social Worker.

12. Recruiting Foster Carers

A Recruitment Strategy is in place to promote the effectiveness of recruitment activity and this is monitored to ensure value for money.

A range of activities are in place, which involve broad and targeted advertising, using a range of media (e.g. advertising in public libraries, GP surgeries, local and social media etc.) to promote the ongoing recruitment of foster carers.

Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Process



13. Foster Carer Training

An extensive training programme is provided to all foster carers applying to foster with North Tyneside Council. A number of courses are specifically designed to be completed pre-approval to ensure all newly approved foster carers have a range of skills and a significant knowledge base to support them in their new role. Core courses (to be completed in the first year of approval) and refresher courses (to be renewed every three years) are provided in addition to courses of specific interest to the carer's approval category. The training matrix is available on the fostering service portal. Workbooks and individual training are also provided by the dedicated trainer.

Core Courses	Refresher Courses
Child Protection	Child Protection Refresher, which includes the Assessment Framework and Recording
Protecting Children Supporting Foster Carers (includes Safer Caring and Recording)	Protecting Children Supporting Foster Carers (includes Safer Caring and Recording)
First Aid	First Aid
Attachment Training	Attachment Training
Recording	Recording
Health & Wellbeing	Equality and diversity
Equality & Diversity	Health and safety
Managing Behaviour	
Health and Safety	

The training is provided during the day and at weekends to encourage attendance.

Foster Carers can also access multi agency training and online training through the North Tyneside Workforce Development Team.

Foster Carers are regarded as a key professional group whose developmental needs are identified in North Tyneside Children's Workforce Strategy.

14. Panel

North Tyneside Council's Panel operates to the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 in respect of fostering matters presented to it. The Panel meets monthly to consider each application for approval and the matching of children to long term foster carers. The Panel also addresses issues arising through the review process and the operation of the fostering service in relation to the needs of children.

15. Foster Carer Reviews

Foster carers are reviewed by a team of independent people through a contract with Fostering Network. The first Foster Carer review is held within 12 months of provisional approval and annually thereafter. All first foster carer reviews are presented to the Panel

for consideration of approval. A rolling programme ensures all second and subsequent reviews are presented to the Panel on a three-yearly basis.

16. Process for Reviewing The Statement Of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually. The next review will take place by October 2020 and be led by the fostering service.

In reviewing, we will take note of our learning in the previous year, from what we have done well and areas for improvement; research; the views of children in care, foster carers, staff and other professionals.