



Statement of Purpose

2016/2017



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Introduction

This statement of purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989.
- The Care Standards Act 2000.
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011.

The statement of purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation three, includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of Active Care Solutions (ACS) fostering service.
- A statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

A copy of this statement of purpose is available on our website and copies will be made available, upon request, to:

- Any person working for ACS.
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer.
- Any child or young person placed with ACS.
- The parent/person with parental responsibility for a child or young person placed with ACS.
- Local authorities who place or are considering placing children and young people with ACS foster carers.
- Colleagues in children's social care.
- General public.

This statement of purpose will be reviewed and updated annually by the ACS board of directors.

About ACS

ACS is an independent fostering agency that is a majority owned subsidiary of Core Assets Group Limited.

It is registered as an independent fostering agency under provision of the Care Standards Act 2000 and regulated by Ofsted. ACS was rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2016 and is now aiming for 'outstanding'.

ACS was set up largely in response to a growing need for a prompt co-ordinated service which provides bespoke packages of care to meet the needs of individual children and young people. As well as meeting the needs of children, young people and foster carers from the wider community, ACS has developed a service that also engages and supports the ever growing need for foster carers from diverse backgrounds.



We aim to:

Provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment to young people in our care. We believe that young people should be provided with opportunities to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

Objectives:

- To recruit a sufficient pool of high quality foster carers from diverse communities to offer local authorities appropriate choices/matches to meet the identified needs of the ever increasing numbers of children and young people coming into the care system from these communities.
- To recruit, assess, train and prepare resilient foster carers to meet the identified needs of children and young people referred to us, including; children and young people with disabilities, complex behaviours, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, residential migration and parent and child placements.
- To provide local authorities with bespoke packages of care that meet the individual needs of the child or young person.
- To retain foster carers through effective training, support and supervision and in turn provide placement stability for children and young people.
- To ensure staff are trained and equipped to deliver high quality and timely services within the context of National Minimum Standards and Regulatory frameworks.



Services provided

ACS offers a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with approved foster carers. All placements are appropriately and professionally 'matched' ensuring a detailed process between the needs of the children and young people and the skills, competence and experience of foster carers to meet those needs.

We provide a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages and needs, these include:

- Long term placements.
- Short term placements.

- Emergency placements.
- Bridging placements.
- Respite placements.
- Solo placements.
- Parent and child placements.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Sibling group placements.
- Placements for children who are disabled.
- Step down from residential placements.

All placements made with our foster carers are undertaken and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (+2013).

Organisational structure

Responsible Individual – Mark Costello

Mark joined Core Assets in 2013, as a registered manager for the Midlands region. He was promoted to chief operating officer in January 2015. Prior to joining Core Assets, Mark was a registered manager for one of our competitors and also spent eight years as a regional manager for several children's homes. He is also a qualified primary school teacher.

Registered Manager – Mohammed Bashir

Mohammed holds a postgraduate diploma and MA in Social Work and a BA in Social Policy and Administration. He has over 20 years' experience in social and community work, including as a senior fostering manager at an IFA. He project-led the development and implementation of Active Care Solutions and is the agency decision-maker.

Operational Manager – Kasore Khan

Kasore has a BSc in Management Studies and 15 years' experience in developing and managing financial businesses. He has worked with children with disabilities and as an outreach worker for Barnardo's before joining an IFA. He has been instrumental in the development of Active Care Solutions.

Fostering Service Manager – Andrew Nugent

Andrew has a diploma in social work and over 20 years' experience in social and community care. He has worked for Foster Care Associates since 2003, holding roles including team manager and principle social worker. He has been a key part of developing Active Care Solutions.

Placements Officer – Jennifer Dear

Jennifer has over five years' experience in fostering agencies. She now works at Active Care Solutions, where she matches children and young people with the foster carers who can meet their needs best.

Support Worker – Keilagh Brinkley

Keilagh was in care from the age of five to 16. She made the decision to become a support worker following her own experiences of the care system and a need to influence positive change. She's now a care-experienced mentor. Keilagh is especially passionate about improving the lives of vulnerable people who use social care services, using her experiences to make a positive difference.

Administrator – Asia Shabir-Masood

Asia previously worked for FCA at the Fostering Advice Service in Blackburn, for five years, completing initial enquiries with potential foster carers. Asia has also worked in the community with vulnerable adults, providing support with day to day living. Asia's experience, skills and knowledge assists with the growth and development of ACS.

Supervising Social Workers – Sakab Akram, Stephanie Bourne and Nasreen Bhokari

The social workers in the team have varied backgrounds in local authority or independent fostering agency social work. The team is diverse, multilingual and multicultural, making them great at working sensitively with different communities, which is at the heart of Active Care Solutions.

As the company grows, we will continue to employ staff who deliver the fostering service in line with the Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Fostering and who understand the Active Care Solutions ethos.

- All supervising social workers will need a social work qualification and receive regular supervision from the fostering service manager.
- All workers undertaking Form F assessments will need a social work qualification and experience in undertaking assessments.
- Form F assessors will need to attend practice development meetings regularly so their skills and knowledge keep developing.

Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers



ACS is committed to the recruitment of foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people, through the provision of high quality care. All potential foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to the following process:

- On receiving an enquiry from a potential foster carer, an ACS representative from the recruitment centre will contact the prospective foster carer and request basic information before forwarding literature, giving details about the work of the agency and the recruitment process.
- If a potential carer wishes to proceed after receiving the literature, they are requested to contact the agency and an initial home visit with an ACS fostering representative will be arranged. At this point the ACS representative will answer any questions and queries that potential carers may have and they will conduct a basic health and safety check on the carer's home.
- If the decision to proceed is made following the initial home visit, the potential foster carer is asked to complete an application form, giving detailed information about them and their family and consent for ACS to complete necessary checks and enquiries to ascertain their suitability to foster.

Details of the statutory checks that are required to be undertaken are contained within the application pack and include criminal record checks for all adult members of the household, medical checks, and local authority/employment checks.

In addition to the statutory checks that are required to be undertaken the potential foster carer is required to provide details of at least three personal referees (two personal references and one family reference) who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process.

We aim to conclude the assessment process within three to six months from the date of application. During this period the potential foster carer will be allocated a qualified

social worker who will visit the applicants within their home for approximately up to ten occasions to collect information about all members of the household and the applicant's experience and skills in relation to fostering. The information obtained from the home assessment will form the basis of the Form F Assessment Report. In addition to the home assessment all applicants are required to attend mandatory preparation training. This training is generally held over a period of three days and consists of six modules that the potential carer must complete. This training provides carers with evidence for TSD training standards workbook and incorporates such areas as the responsibilities of being a foster carer, understanding children and young people's experiences and behaviours, working in partnership with other agencies, safer caring principles and dealing with allegations.

The content of the Form F assessment, including feedback from the preparation training, is shared with the applicants and they are invited to make their comments before the presentation of all required paperwork and evidence to the fostering panel.

Based on the information presented to them, the fostering panel will make a recommendation about the suitability of the applicants to be approved as foster carers with ACS. The fostering panel's independent recommendation is then presented to ACS' agency decision maker (ADM) who will make a decision about approval based on all of the information presented.

In line with the National Minimum Standards for fostering the ADM will make the decision within seven working days of receiving the panel recommendation and final panel minutes. This decision is then communicated orally to the potential foster carers within two working days and confirmed in writing within five working days. When receiving the ADM's decision, the applicants are also informed of their right to appeal this decision via the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

Support to foster carers and children in placement

ACS offers a comprehensive package to ensure that foster carers are fully supported and placements are successful. This includes:

- 1. Access** to a member of staff 24 hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days of the year.
- 2. Supervision** and support from a qualified and suitably experienced ACS supervising social worker who visits at a minimum of once a month whenever any child is in placement (support visits are increased in line with the needs of any given placement) and maintains regular telephone contact.
- 3. Respite** and/or holiday contributions for children and young people.
- 4. Support for foster carers** including a comprehensive package to ensure that foster carers are fully supported and placements are successful. This includes an allocated ACS social worker, who visits at least monthly whenever a child is in placement, and 24 hour access to an 'Out of Hours' duty social worker. Additional support from the ACS children and young people's support worker who has care experience would be available as and when required.
- 5. A comprehensive** foster carers' handbook.
- 6. Membership with Foster Talk** helpline and specialist independent support scheme.

- 7. A comprehensive post-approval training programme** including access to Level Three Diploma for Children and Young People's Workforce. Pre-approval training is provided for all prospective foster carers and is a crucial element of the foster carer recruitment process.

Post-approval training is provided by ACS utilising a mix of 'in-house' and external training providers. All ACS foster carers are expected to complete the training, support and development standards for foster carers within the first year of their approval and follow a training programme which is clearly linked to:

- The national minimum standards for fostering which focus upon securing and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- The competencies identified within the NVQ in England Level 3 Diploma in Caring for Children & Young People.
- Key findings from research, government guidance and examples of best practice.

Foster carers' training needs are constantly monitored by supervising social workers and formally evaluated through annual reviews of the terms of their approval.

- 8. A level of financial support** that values the skills of foster carers.

All placements of children with ACS foster carers will result from careful initial "matching" undertaken by ACS staff in consultation with the local authority staff that refer the children. All placements are monitored continuously by ACS supervising social workers together with local authority colleagues, and such other professional staff as may be involved. Careful attention is given to the individual health, developmental and educational needs of children and therapy, education and resource support may be accessed depending on the needs of children in placement and consultation with their responsible authorities.

Representation and complaints procedure

All users of the agency will be advised of their right to make a complaint or representation about the services they have received. They will be issued with the ACS Complaints and Representation leaflet. Children and young people are issued with information about their right to complain within the agency's Complaints – Guide for Children and Young People.

Stage 1: Informal complaints

These are referred to the fostering service manager. We will meet with the complainant with a view of resolving their complaint with an informal and problem solving approach. Informal complaints are responded to within 10 or (by agreement with the complainant) a maximum of 20 working days of the complaint being made and an outcome letter sent to the complainant. The complainant is informed of their right to make a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 1.

Stage 2: Formal complaints – independent investigation

When a formal complaint is received these are referred to Core Assets' complaints manager who will co-ordinate an independent investigation. Stage 2 investigations are usually completed within 20 working days of meeting the complainant (the complainant will be kept informed if the investigation is likely to exceed these timescales). The complaints manager will inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation at stage 2 and their right to appeal.

📞 0800 917 7937 or 0121 667 1391
✉ info@activecaresolutions.co.uk
🌐 activecaresolutions.co.uk
📘 /activecaresolutionsfostering
🐦 @acs_fostering

Stage 3: Appeal stage – complaints review panel

The complaints review panel consists of an executive director from the agency, another senior manager who has no connection with the complaint, and a relevant independent person. The independent investigators report will be provided to panel members along with any other supporting documents. The complainant will be invited to attend panel to make their representations. Panel will make an initial response to the complainant within 24 hours and provide a written response within five working days together with information about Ofsted if they remain dissatisfied.

Complainants are also entitled to submit a complaint to Ofsted:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester,
M1 2WD

📞 0300 123 1231
✉ enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



“Where embracing diversity is our success.”