



CYNGOR SIR  
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ISLE OF ANGLESEY  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# **ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **FOSTERING SERVICE**

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

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|---------------------|
| Date of Last Review |
| 16/7/2021 - LLBR    |

## **Introduction to the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose**

Isle of Anglesey County Council Fostering Service has produced their “Statement of Purpose” in accordance with The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018.

PART 2 (5) of the regulations details the requirements for the review of the Statement of Purpose and the provision of the document to relevant stakeholders. The Welsh Government has issued the Code of Practice for Local Authority Fostering Services, which elaborates further requirements as to the contents and arrangements for reviewing the Statement of Purpose.

In line with the requirements of The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018, the Statement of Purpose provides information about the Isle of Anglesey County Council Fostering Service. The Statement of Purpose includes details of the management and staffing structure, the range of needs of the children for whom the service is provided, and how the service is delivered to meet the needs of children and support them to achieve their personal outcomes. The Statement of Purpose will be available to Welsh ministers, CIW, approved and prospective foster carers, any child placed by the fostering service, the parents of any such child, persons working for the purpose of the local authority fostering service and any other person on request.

The key legislation/policies governing the work of the fostering service are:

- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- Code of Practice Local Authority Fostering Services 2019
- Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regs 2018
- The Care Planning, Placement and Care Review (Wales) Regs 2015
- The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regs 2018
- Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The United Kingdom National Standards for Foster Care 1999
- The Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Assessment, Approval, Training, Management and Support of Foster Carers 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Isle of Anglesey County Children’s Services Policy and Procedures and other internal policies and procedures relating to Children and Families work.

In addition to the Statement of Purpose, there is a range of specific and procedural documents that support the aims, objectives, service principles and standards set out for the fostering service. We will update our Statement of Purpose on an annual basis, or earlier, in the event of any changes made to the services provided.

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## Section 1

### Management and staff structure of the fostering service

The Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service is part of Children's Services which is based in the Council Offices, Llangefni, Anglesey. The Service is under the overall leadership and direction of the Director of Social Services.

The fostering service provides the full range of family placement services, including fostering, respite care (short breaks), and includes working with independent providers to commission placements for specifically identified needs. Where needs are identified that cannot be met within the Fostering Service the Team will liaise with independent providers to commission the best available placement to meet the child's needs.

#### Management of the service consists of:

- Director of Social Services, **Fôn Roberts**
- Head of Children and Family Services, **Fôn Roberts**
- Service Manager for the fostering service, **Llyr Bryn Roberts**
- Practice Leader for the fostering service, **Keith Walters**

Discussion about how we continue to strengthen the work of the fostering service is ongoing with staff, children and young people and foster carers through team meetings, a consultation group we are developing with Voices from Care and through the Anglesey Foster Care Forum.

#### Staffing structure of the service

All staff in the fostering service are bi-lingual employees of Isle of Anglesey County Council and as such have the same rights, responsibilities and benefits of any employee within the council. Isle of Anglesey County Council promotes the well-being of their employees through a number of schemes, which are available to staff, such as:

- Flexible working scheme
- Flexible working policy
- Carers Leave Policy
- Disability Leave Policy
- Careers Breaks Policy
- Flexible retirement policy
- Additional Annual purchase scheme
- An annual wellbeing calendar of various events / signposting of information
- Occupational Health & Physiotherapy Service
- Self-Referral Counselling Service

Currently the staff structure of the fostering service consists of qualified social worker posts and unqualified posts, with both part time and full time positions:

Practice Leader x 1 full time

Social Worker x 4 full time

Social Worker x 1 part time (0.40)

Recruitment and Placement Officer x 1 full time

Connected Person's and Mainstream Support Worker x 2 full time

All qualified social workers register with Social Care Wales and training and professional

development opportunities are provided to maintain their registration, meet regulatory requirements and to promote continuous professional development.

Staff in other roles have learning and development opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in their current roles and to promote continuous professional development to move onto other roles, such as the social work traineeship scheme.

### **Aims and objectives of the fostering service**

The fostering service is determined to provide an outstanding service to all children in foster care and a standard of care that meets or exceeds their needs. We recognise the central importance of foster care as a vehicle for transforming the lives of children in public care. Foster carers are regarded as making a hugely valuable contribution and should, therefore, be provided with first rate preparation, training and support to carry out their role to maximum effect. As a responsible Corporate Parent, we are committed to listening to the voice of each child and young person, assessing their needs and comprehensively planning to meet them. The fostering service will work in effective partnership with their families, foster carers, colleagues within the County Council, and other agencies with the objective of delivering the best possible care and support to looked after children and young people

The Fostering Service aims to ensure that:

- (a) All fostered children to be provided with a well-planned, stable and high quality placement that will enhance their life chances.
- (b) The service will be responsive to the needs of children who require a fostering placement, recruiting sufficient carers to offer placement choice.
- (c) To provide excellent support and service to foster carers, by suitably experienced, skilled and qualified social work staff, managers and administrative support staff.
- (d) To provide a progression pathway for foster carers that supports them to consider fostering more challenging and harder to place children

To achieve these aims we adopt the following objectives:

- Ensure, where possible, that children are brought by their parents
- Where this is not possible we look to their family of origin: supporting children and young people to remain with adults they know and trust if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents
- The provision of well planned, stable and high quality placements to meet children's needs and improve their outcomes.
- Children are entitled to grow up in a safe, loving environment that can meet their developmental needs.
- A child/young person's wishes and feelings will be taken into account, and children/young people will be encouraged to participate in decisions about their care.
- Local placements to promote continuity and maintain family networks will be provided wherever possible.
- Children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefiting from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Placement stability and consistency of care is promoted in every possible way to give all children /young people a settled experience in fostering.
- Each child is valued as an individual and each placement will meet the requirements of the child's care plan and wherever possible reflect the child's racial, cultural, religious and linguistic background.
- Siblings will be placed together, wherever possible, consistent with their needs
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- The significance of contact for looked after children, and maintaining positive relationships with birth parents, the wider family and other significant people is valued, as is the foster carer's role in this.

- Young people are enabled to stay in their foster families beyond their eighteenth birthday up to age 21 subject to this being in the best interests of the young person and with the full agreement of the foster carers.
- The educational achievements of Looked After children and young people are promoted and foster carers enabled to call upon the support of the LAC Education Officer in helping to improve the educational achievement of young people in their care.
- Have a varied choice of placements that are able to meet the needs of different children and young people.
- Proactive in our aim in achieving permanence for our looked after children and young people by supporting foster carers to apply for a Special Guardianship Order. In doing so, this is meeting the child's need for a legally secure relationship with their carer and they would no longer be looked after by the local authority.

## **Section 2**

### **Who do we provide the fostering service for?**

The Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service aims to provide excellent quality care for children and young people who are looked after by the local authority. We recruit and approve local foster carers who we support to provide a stable and caring home for any child who cannot be cared for by their family, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children. We aim to have high quality and experienced foster carers that focus and prioritise keeping children local in meeting their cultural, linguistic, educational, social, physical and emotional needs and constantly striving on improving their outcomes.

Our foster carers are approved to care for children 0-18 years of age, on a temporary basis, until they can return home to family members, or on a permanent basis until children reach adulthood. Family and friends who are approved as connected persons foster carers care for specific children.

The team are involved in the reviews of permanency plans for looked after children who are being cared for by family and children who are living with parents while remaining on a care order and friends through progressing special guardianship arrangements.

In addition, the fostering service supports young people to remain with their foster family post 18 years old through 'When I am Ready' arrangements.

Every child has their own individual needs and the overall aim of the fostering service is to ensure that children and young people live in an environment that keeps them safe from abuse and neglect, and promotes their emotional and physical well-being and educational development.

## **Section 3**

### **How we recruit our foster carers**

In order to provide a local service, which meets the needs of Anglesey children and supports them to achieve their personal outcomes, we aim to recruit a range of carers and support them to develop the knowledge and skills to understand the needs of the children and how to care for them.

Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service is a member of Maethu Cymru - Foster Wales, a collaboration of all the local authorities in Wales with the aim of working together to promote fostering and attract enquiries from suitable prospective foster carers. As a fostering service we aim to recruit enough fostering families that will enable us to match children with the right foster family. The fostering service values the opportunity to work with the local community and businesses to engage local people in the recruitment process.

Fostering enquiries may be received through the website, direct email or telephone contact, and in person at recruitment events. We aim to provide further information about fostering for Isle of Anglesey County Council to all initial enquiries within one working day, followed where appropriate with an offer of an initial visit. If applicants wish to proceed further and it is suitable, we will invite prospective carers to attend our pre-approval The Skills to Foster training. Becoming an approved foster carer is the beginning of a journey and we understand that making the decision to foster requires information, advice and support, and we aim to provide this every step of the way.

The local authority strives to be an inclusive and foster family friendly employer and as such, our internal Carer and Special Leave Policy may be used for time off required for fostering (including relevant training courses), for those foster carers whom are also Isle of Anglesey County Council employees.

Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service has experienced assessing social workers to undertake our fostering assessments and each prospective foster carer(s) is allocated an assessing social worker. All fostering assessments are undertaken in accordance with The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018 and include statutory checks, medical assessments, employment and personal references, which will be undertaken for all applicants. DBS checks will also be required for any other adult living in the household. We share the completed assessment report with the prospective foster carer(s) who have the opportunity to make written comment on the process and final report.

If during the assessment any information comes to light that would mean applicants are not deemed suitable to become foster carers, they are notified in writing in line with the requirements of The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2018.

As a fostering service we aim to be proactive in supporting foster carers to transfer from other fostering agencies and the focus of all our work with children and young people is on improving their outcomes. Having more foster carers that are local and live within the local authority area provides us with more capacity to match children positively to our carers, enabling them to stay close to their neighbourhoods.

Applicants are invited to attend the Fostering and Permanency Panel with their assessor when their assessment report is being presented by their assessing social worker. We aim to make the experience of attending panel as comfortable as possible and give applicants the opportunity to contribute to the discussion as well as ask questions of their own. Panel will make a recommendation, which will be considered by the Agency Decision Maker. Applicants will receive confirmation of the outcome of their application to become foster carers by letter.

The fostering service undertakes assessments required under regulation 26 The Care Planning, Placement and Care Review (Wales) Regs 2015 for the immediate placement of children with family or friends known to them.

Should alternative arrangements be required, connected persons assessments are undertaken on family members or friends identified as potential carers for children prior to, or during legal proceedings. Currently the fostering service also undertakes viability assessments jointly with the child's social worker.

### **Fostering and Permanency Panel**

This panel has been set up to meet the requirements of the The Fostering Panels (Establishment and Functions) (Wales) Regs 2018. It considers recommendations about the approval of foster carers, and oversees the assessment and review of the Service's carers, meeting monthly.

Panel has 10 members comprising:

- Chairperson – The panel is independently chaired.
- Independent Foster Carer
- 2 Independent Members with experience of fostering and/or foster care.

- An Isle of Anglesey County Council Councillor
- Independent member
- Two Social workers, one with a background in family placement, and one with a background in child care.
- Health representative
- Education representative, and
- Panel Adviser, designated from within the Fostering Service.
- Legal advisor to the Panel

Membership of the Panel exceeds the minimum requirements as outlined in the regulations.

## **Section 4**

### **What we do to support our children and foster carers.**

Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service provides a range of support initiatives for both new and experienced foster carers to assist and support them in meeting the needs of Anglesey children and young people.

#### **Preparatory training**

Applicants are required to attend a preparatory training course. If couples apply both partners are expected to attend. We use the recommended *The Skills to Foster* training provided by The Fostering Network. Training groups take place approximately twice a year, depending on the number of applicants, and is held over three days (the specialist Connected Persons Preparatory Training is a one day course). The basic subjects covered are as follows:

- Session 1: What do foster carers do?
- Session 2: Identity and life chances
- Session 3: Working with others
- Session 4: Understanding and caring for children
- Session 5: Safer caring
- Session 6: Transitions

#### **Supervision and Support**

Each fostering household is allocated a supervising social worker who will provide home and virtual (online) visits, supervision and support for the foster family. Foster carers can contact their supervising social worker between visits if needed, when in need of additional support the frequency of contact and visits can increase.

Formal supervision will take place every three months between the foster carer(s) and supervising social worker (in the foster carer's preferred language), unless otherwise agreed with the carer. Supervision is formally recorded and signed by both the Supervising Social Worker and the foster carers. Supervision will help to consolidate any learning from training, provide an opportunity to reflect on the fostering role and to identify any additional support needed for the child and foster family.

The supervising social worker will complete a Foster Carer Review on an annual basis as a minimum. Annual reviews provide an opportunity for the foster carers, their family, the children they care for and social workers to reflect on the previous 12 months as foster carers. Isle of Anglesey County Council foster panel will consider the annual review reports where it is:

- First annual review
- Change of approval status is being requested
- In the event of a significant change in the fostering household

- Every third year in the event of no change as a quality assurance function
- After completion of a section 47 investigation where an allegation has been made against a member(s) of the fostering household

Fostering panel will make a recommendation of the continued registration of the foster carer(s), including any change to their approval status. Foster carers are welcome to attend fostering panel with their supervising social worker to contribute to the discussion and ask any questions. Fostering panel are keen that foster carers receive the positive comments made by panel members when considering their foster carer review.

### **Learning, Development and Support Groups**

Learning and development opportunities are provided through a variety of methods, such as formal training, 1:1 sessions with their social worker, access to online resources for information and learning and support groups.

Foster carers are offered a rolling program of training covering the essential core subjects required to provide a skilled service. Carers are also given the opportunity to achieve The City & Guilds – Health and Social Care Children Level 3.

Quarterly 'Coffee & Cake' sessions are held by the fostering service which is a coffee morning with learning opportunities. This is a support group available for mainstream and connected person's foster carers, and speakers attend the group to provide information and advice.

Every year we hold the annual 'Bake off' during the Foster Care Fortnight where Council staff and foster carers participate in a cooking competition where all the money raised goes towards the Anglesey Foster Care Association (AFCA). The AFCA is a charity run by Isle of Anglesey County Council foster carers for all of Anglesey local authority foster carers.

The Isle of Anglesey Foster Care Forum is held on a quarterly basis in order to give all foster carers a formal voice in the development of the fostering service. It aims to facilitate regular communication and consultation with foster carers in order to continually improve and develop the fostering service on Anglesey. All mainstream and connected persons foster carers are invited to attend the forum's meetings and other attendees may include social workers, members of the Senior Management.

We also communicate with our foster carers through a monthly newsletter which includes current information regarding learning and development opportunities for our carers.

The Chair of the Anglesey Foster Care Association is a member of the Isle of Anglesey Corporate Parenting Panel which meets every quarter. The Chair is able to share with other Panel members their first-hand experience of fostering including the significant positive caring role our foster carers are able to provide for our local children.

As a recognition of the excellent work undertaken by our foster carers the Council holds a biennial foster carers' celebration event, where foster carers are recognised and thanked by the local authority's elected members and Senior Management Team.

### **Financial support**

Foster carers are provided with financial support to care for a child in the form of a weekly fostering allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child and a weekly placement fee for the foster carer. The fostering allowance and the placement fee is provided for each child placed with the foster carer(s) and vary according to the age of the child. Fostering allowances are set using Welsh Government recommendations of a National Minimum Fostering Allowance. Information about fees and allowances and other financial support is updated at the beginning of the new financial year and distributed to all foster carers.

During 2019 the Isle of Anglesey County Council agreed to enhance the package in terms of

allowances and benefits for foster carers as a recognition of the challenging role they undertook. The comprehensive package of benefits that agreed from April 2019 was:

- An increase of 10% in fostering allowance per child;
- A 50% discount in Council Tax;
- To provide a free Isle of Anglesey County Council Leisure Services Membership Card;
- To provide a free Council car parking ticket.

This has enabled foster carers and looked after children access to leisure and sport activities in any of the local authority leisure centres on the Island at a lower membership price and they can also access other offers such as the free family swim sessions. This promotes the health and well-being of Foster Carers and the children that they look after to live a healthier lifestyle.

Foster carers are paid travel expenses for transporting children to school, health appointments, contact etc. Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service has clear written guidelines for making claims.

Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service provide foster carers with equipment such as bedroom furniture, pushchairs, cots and travel seats in order to care for a child. We will work with our colleagues in Health to ensure children with a disability have the equipment needed in their foster home. The fostering service has clear written guidance on what equipment is provided for foster carers.

### **Additional support**

**Home contents insurance** – the Isle of Anglesey County Council has an insurance policy that covers all foster carers registered to the Local Authority.

**Respite care** – Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service recruits respite foster carers to provide support for the foster carer and child if appropriate for the child.

**Out of hours telephone support** - the Out of Hours Social Work Service is available to foster carers outside normal office hours.

**Foster Carer Counselling Service** - as part of our commitment to foster carers health and wellbeing, the fostering service works in conjunction with Medra Counselling Services to offer a designated, free, confidential counselling service to all Anglesey foster carers.

All foster carers with the Anglesey fostering service are given free membership to The Fostering Network and as part of your membership welcome pack they receive a copy of the [Signposts in Fostering](#) publications. These are a series of information booklets giving both new and experienced foster carers guidance in crucial areas, including 'Income tax and national insurance', 'Insurance' and 'Benefits'. The Fostering Network allows access to free learning and development opportunities, a fostering advice line and any other initiatives developed by the organisation.

Foster carers can access education advice and information from the Looked After Children Education Co-ordinator and advice and information regarding health from the Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Each child who is looked after has a health assessment initiated by the clinical nurse specialist, which will identify any health need, and refer to specialists as necessary. When searching for foster carers to care for our children the Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service use all the information provided to assess the foster carers skills and ability to meet the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children.

## Section 5

### How we consult with our children and foster carers

Isle of Anglesey County Council fostering service has a variety of methods used to consult with our foster carers and children both on an individual basis and as a collective.

**Foster Carer Annual Reviews** – we provide the opportunity for children in the foster family to give feedback about what they do and do not like about living with their foster family. We also ask the foster carers' own children for their views about being an approved foster family and for the foster carers to express their views. We encourage comments on the wider fostering service as well as their personal views. Currently information is collated using a consultation form sent out prior to the review to complete in order to provide their views and comment on the fostering undertaken and the support received from the fostering service.

**Anglesey Foster Carer Forum** – Isle of Anglesey County Council foster carers are invited to attend the Anglesey Foster Carer Forum, which is an opportunity for foster carers to meet senior management and the elected member responsible for fostering in Isle of Anglesey County Council. We use the forum to provide foster carers with updates on national and regional fostering service developments as well as consult on proposals for local service developments. The forum has been established since 2014 and is held on a quarterly basis.

**Annual Consultation (Foster Carers' Quality Assurance Questionnaire)** – the fostering service distributes an annual questionnaire to all its registered foster carers, inviting them to share their experiences, thoughts and views on different aspects of the service. This ranges from frequency of contact from team members through to their satisfaction with annual reviews or out of hours support. The questionnaire is anonymous and can be completed by paper copy or electronically via an online link. The results from the questionnaire are used to feed in to the service's Quality of Care report and inform areas of service improvement and development.

**National and regional consultation** – we use email to distribute requests for consultation from a variety of external partners as well as in-house practitioners e.g. National Fostering Framework and The Fostering Network. Foster carers contribute directly to these consultations, usually through a link shared through an email distribution list.

**Consultation with children** - Isle of Anglesey County Council is establishing a consultation group with Voices from Care to give them a voice and influence in decision-making on issues that matter to them. We are currently in the process of establishing a working group for teenagers 13 years and upwards to develop looked after children and care leavers' strategy and provide a platform that supports relationship building between them and their corporate parents in Anglesey.

### Complaints and representation

Children, their foster carers, and other people affected by fostering should be able to make effective representations, including complaints, about any aspect of the Council's fostering services whether they are provided directly by the Agency or by a contracted Agency.

All foster carers and looked after young people using the fostering service are provided with written and verbal information about the complaints procedures. It is the responsibility of the Fostering practice leader to monitor complaints.

Any person who is unhappy with the service that they have received from the fostering service should first speak to the staff who have been working with them or their manager. However, if they feel unable to speak to them, or believe that they have not dealt with their concern satisfactorily, they should contact the Customer Care officer:

Ms Sophie Shanahan,  
Designated Complaint Officer,  
Housing and Social Services,

Council Offices,  
Llangefni,  
Ynys Môn,  
LL77 7TW.

## **Section 6**

### **Useful contact details**

#### **Care Inspectorate Wales**

0300 7900 126

[ciw@gov.wales](mailto:ciw@gov.wales)

Welsh Government office

Sarn Mynach

Llandudno Junction

LL31 9RZ

#### **Social Care Council**

South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW

Tel: 0300 3033 444

#### **Children's Commissioner for Wales**

Oystermouth House, Charter Court, Phoenix Way

Llansamlet, Swansea, SA7 9FS

Tel: 01792 765600

#### **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend. CF35 5LJ

Tel: 0300 7900 203