

Statement of Purpose

Shine children at the Banksy Exhibition London June 2021



Version: September 2021

Contents

- 1. Our Statement of Purpose**
 - 1.1 We Are an Independent Fostering Agency
 - 1.2 Our Vision and Values
 - 1.3 Our Practice Model
 - 1.4 Safeguarding Children
 - 1.5 Equality and Diversity
- 2. People and Organisation**
 - 2.1 Getting the Right People - Safer Recruitment
- 3. Aims and Objectives**
- 4. Foster Carers**
 - 4.1 Recruitment of Foster Carers
 - 4.2 Assessment of Foster Carers
 - 4.3 Approval of Foster Carers
 - 4.4 Foster Carer Reviews
 - 4.5 Foster Care Agreements
 - 4.6 Services and Support for Foster Carers
 - 4.7 Key Roles in Supporting Foster Carers
 - 4.8 Training
 - 4.9 Financial Support
- 5. Working with Local Authorities**
 - 5.1 Foster Care for Children and Young People
 - 5.2 Parent and Child Arrangements
- 6. Working with Children and Young People**
 - 6.1 Involving Our Children
 - 6.2 Direct Work
- 7. Checking What We Do**
- 8. Whistleblowing**

1. Our Statement of Purpose

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 require every fostering services provider to compile a written statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the services and facilities (including any parent and child arrangements) provided by the fostering service.

This is the Statement of Purpose for Shine Fostering. It outlines our aims and objectives, describes what we do and how we do it. The Statement is reviewed regularly and approved by the agency's Registered Manager. This revision was completed in September 2021.

1.1 We Are an Independent Fostering Agency

Shine Fostering is an independent fostering agency. We have been registered with Ofsted since March 2013.

Shine is a small fostering service with carers in the Greater London area. We are a bespoke agency, catering for a limited number of carers, in order to offer the best service for our carers and children. We provide a tailor-made support system for carers and children alike. We want both to experience personal development, enjoy learning opportunities and acquire new skills, during their time with us.

The fostering agency is a private company, limited by guarantee. Our accounts are audited, and we take the view that financial stability is fundamental, so that we can develop our services and improve what we do.

Our contact details

Offices	109 George Lane, South Woodford, London, E18 1AN
Phone	020 8530 7679
Website	https://shinefostering.co.uk/
Email	info@shinefostering.co.uk

1.2 Our Vision and Values

At Shine Fostering we passionately believe that children are the heartbeat of our organisation. The sky is the limit and together we will shine.

Sharing this vision, we work with all those involved in the lives of our foster children, believing our children can and will thrive.

The values, which support us to put our vision into practice, are integrity, honesty, fairness and openness.

Integrity

We will do what we say we will do. We follow through commitments to carers, children and all our working partners. We care about what we do, we want it to be the best we can do, in all circumstances.

Honesty

We will be truthful and not mislead people. We share information whenever we can and do not withhold it from those who have legitimate, good reason to know and be informed.

Fairness

We seek to be fair in delivering our services to children and carers by understanding and acting on their individual needs and offering support and training which is personalised. We listen to and heed what people say. We will challenge any preconceptions, prejudices and stereotyping we find in how we work, our carers, our working partners and our foster children.

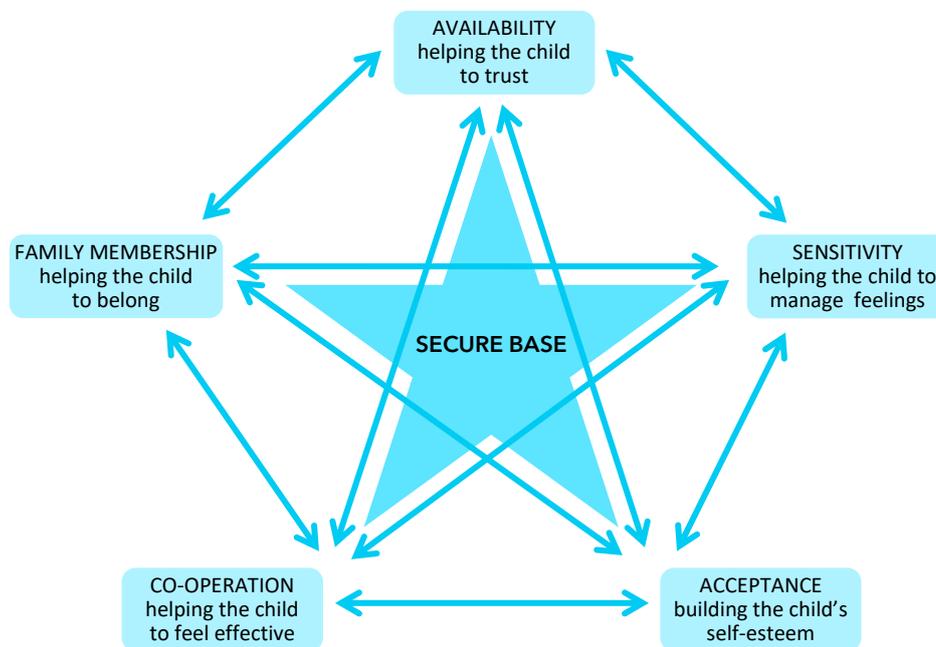
Openness

We invite questions and discussion about what we do. We try to include everyone in how the organisation works, including changes to what we do, policies, planning events. Our procedures for complaints, grievances and whistleblowing are available to ensure there are ways to find resolution where informal means have not resolved issues.

1.3 Our Practice Model

With the Secure Base Model, we have a positive, adaptable framework for therapeutic caregiving, and for our foster carer assessment process and training.

The model is based on attachment theory, which looks at how the quality of the relationship between a young child and their primary caregivers shapes a child's emotional, psychological and social development throughout their lives. The goal for our children is to build feelings of security and resilience.



This is also a model for our team practice and ethos, providing us with a work-related secure base for each other. The resilience and competence this promotes benefits not just team members as individuals but also our collective capacity to work effectively with foster carers and children.

1.4 Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

We safeguard our children by:

- protecting them from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to their health or development
- ensuring they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone at Shine Fostering.

Understanding and managing risk

We cannot eliminate risk, but we can analyse, and be alert to, a child's vulnerabilities. At Shine, we work with our carers, children, and the professionals involved in their care and education, to minimise harm and bad experiences. Foster carers give children the care and guidance to take appropriate risks, as a normal part of growing up. Children are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when outside of the household or when using the internet or social media.

Safer Care

Safer care practice by our foster carers safeguards children while at the same time ensuring that carers and their families are protected from the risks of allegations and complaints.

Safer care plans are the practical guides to safer care in a fostering household. Each foster home must have their own plan, compiled with the help of their Supervising Social Worker, and updated when a new child is fostered. Each foster child will write their own personal safer care plan. When a parent and child arrangement is made, the carers and the parent draft a safer care agreement.

Child Protection and Managing Allegations

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

In our Safeguarding Policy we explain what we do to nurture and protect children. The policy includes procedures for child protection and managing allegations against staff and foster carers. It also looks at the bigger picture of safety and well-being.

The allegations against staff and foster carers procedure is followed if a foster carer, member of staff or volunteer of the agency is involved in suspected harm to a foster child.

The Child Protection Procedure is followed in all other circumstances if a child placed with a Shine foster carer has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Our Agency Decision Maker is the Designated Officer who takes the lead in co-ordinating child protection referrals and management of allegations.

Concerns which are not about safeguarding matters

For other concerns, which do not involve harm to a child, we have a formal complaints procedure. It is made available to children, their families, and all foster carers. The Children's Guide explains how to complain and encourages children to understand that they should not keep quiet when they have reason to complain.

The Registered Manager takes the lead in dealing with a complaint.

1.5 Equality and Diversity

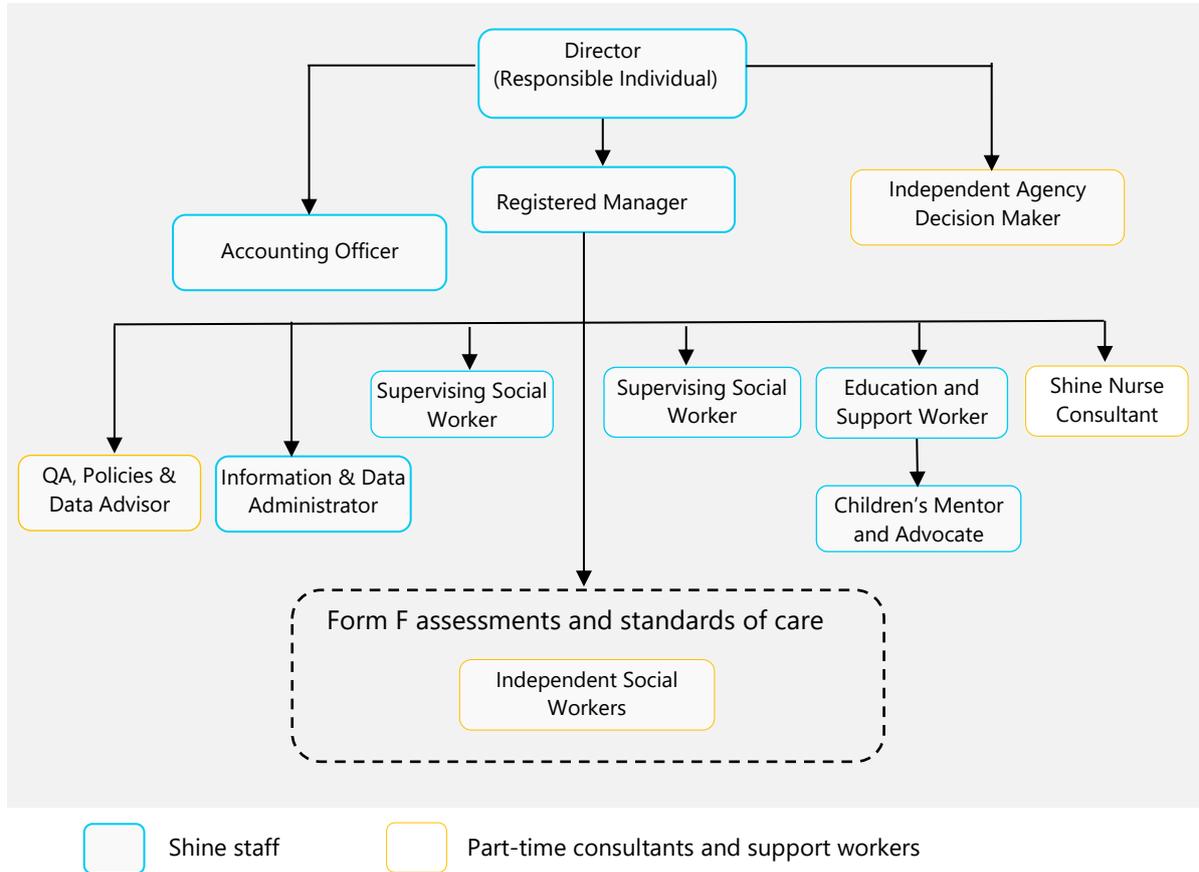
Shine Fostering is committed to treating all individuals fairly. This is one of our founding values. We are conscious of the discrimination and institutional racism which carers, foster children and staff may experience. We are here to support each other to put an end to this.

The agency follows equal opportunities policies in the recruitment and treatment of staff and foster carers, and in the delivery of services to children. Our recruitment and employment activities are monitored. We seek feedback from carers and children about our fostering agency. We learn from this and act on it.

Everyone is invited to training on equality and diversity practice and expectations. This is one of our most important whole-agency events.

2. People and Organisation

The organisational chart summarises the agency's staffing arrangements.



Staff members receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. They have access to regular training to be aware of new developments, key changes in legislation, process, and best practice. Our grievances policy provides guidance and procedures for complaints about employment and working for Shine.

2.1 Getting the Right People - Safer Recruitment

To safeguard the welfare of children, our recruitment is governed by the agency's policy and procedures for safer recruitment.

Application forms must be completed for all posts. There must be no unexplained gaps in working history. Enhanced DBS, identity, right to work in the UK checks and references are required for everyone who works in whatever capacity for Shine Fostering. We check that references and qualifications are authentic and documentation valid.

3. Our Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of Shine Fostering is to recruit, train and support foster carers who have a special ability to care for our amazing children. Each child will thrive and have the best possible outcomes.

When a child comes to live in a Shine foster family:

- they should expect to be recognised and treated as an individual, full of potential, and not be treated as a problem
- have their day-to-day needs met by being in a family home with carers who will keep them safe from harm, all forms of abuse and neglect
- feel at home, happy and valued in their foster families and able to develop positive relationships with foster carers who take a real interest in them and will provide appropriate parenting and care
- receive support and guidance to cope with the past and to move towards adulthood, equipped emotionally, psychologically and with practical knowledge and skills
- be cared for by foster carers who are appropriately trained and supported to the highest standards
- experience a healthy lifestyle and gain a good understanding of health matters
- be treated with respect at all times
- be offered individual support and guidance in education or work
- receive encouragement and assistance to participate as far as possible in the planning and decision making about their life
- know that we take a real interest in their lives, that it is easy to talk to us, and we will, wherever possible, be responsive, explain our actions and why certain things cannot be arranged, should that be the case.

4. Foster Carers

Shine Fostering provides foster care placements with approved foster carers for children and young people who are looked after by local authorities. The agency is based in east London and works primarily in the Greater London area.

We cannot overstate what a challenge it is, to find people who will give children the foster home which is right for them. The needs of children and young people always come first. Finding a match for a child with foster carers involves assessing how well the backgrounds, skills and experience of the carers will meet the needs of a child. With this to the fore, our recruitment is a search for people who will support and nurture children, in their health, education, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

4.1 Recruitment of Foster Carers

Our message to potential foster carers is that fostering is life changing. A caring foster home can make a world of difference to a child. For carers, it is hard work, but also extraordinary, rewarding and life changing.

Our recruitment process is open to anyone who can meet these basic requirements:

- has a spare bedroom
- has not committed a serious offence
- ideally has experience of caring for children and young people
- is willing to engage with others
- is caring and able to empathise
- has insight into the importance of a happy, positive, and loving childhood
- can demonstrate a desire to learn, to acquire new skills and the capacity to put learning into practice
- will be committed to the in-depth foster carer assessment process

Applicants are required to nominate family members or friends to be their backup support - they will be their nominated carers (see section below).

4.2 Assessment of Foster Carers

Shine Fostering carries out all assessments in line with the Fostering Services Regulations and National Minimum Standards. We use the CoramBAAF Form F template for the assessment process and reports.

Establishing the suitability of applicants involves an in-depth assessment process. Applicants participate in a series of visits to the home by the assessing social worker, who is a specialist in this role.

The agency seeks detailed references and the satisfactory completion of important checks into the background and circumstances of the applicants. Usually this all takes about eight months.

4.3 Approval of Foster Carers

When the assessment process has been completed there are two further stages, the Fostering Panel and then the decision by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

The Fostering Panel

Role in approval and quality assurance

All fostering services are required to have a Fostering Panel. Its remit is independent advice and quality assurance in relation to the approval of carers and the work of the fostering service. Fostering Panels are required by Regulation to consider all assessment reports, the first annual review of carers and reports following the investigation of an allegation.

Membership

We have a central list of Panel members and select from it to constitute each Panel. We recruit people to the list who are from diverse backgrounds and walks of life, and who can bring a particular expertise to the Panel's discussions of a wide range of foster care matters.

Training and performance appraisal

The agency provides training annually and all panel members are expected to read and note the content of the agency's policies. An appraisal system is in place to support and develop the Panel membership and its leadership.

Panel meetings

Prospective carers and carers being reviewed are given information about what to expect and are advised that they may bring a friend or advocate with them for support in the meeting.

Following discussion and meeting the applicants, the Panel records its recommendations. These and the minutes of the meeting are sent to the ADM.

The Approval Decision

The ADM examines all the information in the assessment report, the Panel meeting minutes and recommendation of the Fostering Panel.

At Shine Fostering we aim to make the decision in as timely a manner as possible. The decision will be made within seven working days of receipt of both the recommendation of the Panel and the final set of Panel minutes. Within two working days of the decision being made it is shared by phone and the written confirmation is sent within five working days.

Independent Review of a Decision

This applies to applicants and to approved carers. There are circumstances when the ADM decision can be referred to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). This is when a decision is a “qualifying determination” and the individuals concerned do not accept it. For example, if the ADM decides not to approve the application, or discontinues an approval or alters the terms of approval of foster carer. In these situations, agency advises on the options and how to go about challenging a qualifying determination.

The final decision is still made by the ADM, after giving due consideration to the recommendations of the IRM’s Independent Review Panel, all the agency reports, Panel recommendations and minutes.

4.4 Foster Carer Reviews

The main aim of the annual review is to decide whether the foster carer approval continues to be suitable and whether there should be any changes in the terms of the approval. It is an opportunity to look at the progress the carer has made and to set targets and goals for the next year. All approved carers take part in an annual review.

The first review following approval is always presented to the Fostering Panel - required by regulation 28 (5).

It is our policy to take all subsequent reviews to the Panel as it provides additional layer of safeguarding and quality assurance. We expect foster carers to attend on these occasions. Foster carer reports also go to the Fostering Panel in these circumstances:

- when carers request termination of approval
- when significant changes in the terms of approval are being considered
- when there are major concerns about suitability of the carer
- following the investigation of any allegations against the carer.

4.5 Foster Care Agreements

Following the ADM’s notification of the decision on approval, carers agree and sign a Foster Care Agreement, which sets out all their duties and requirements. It is reviewed annually.

4.6 Services and Support for Foster Carers

Stable environments where children can flourish require a lot of hard work by our foster carers. They are trained, supported, and supervised on an ongoing basis. We view our foster carers as skilled professionals and our most important working partners.

All foster carers receive the following:

- an allocated Supervising Social Worker
- handbook of policies and procedures
- post-approval training (see training section below)
- out of hours telephone service
- regular contact with and support from the Education and Support Worker
- health and wellbeing support from the Shine Nurse Consultant
- flexible arrangements where carers need a break
- membership of the Foster Talk and New Family Social
- membership of the National Association of Therapeutic Parents
- foster carer support group meetings
- care package statements for each child
- practical assistance and equipment for specialist care
- access to support from a qualified psychotherapist
- information and guidance on the finances for each child placed with the foster carer (see finances section below).

4.7 Key Roles in Supporting Foster Carers

Carers should never feel isolated. There is always support available for carers at Shine, around the clock, because fostering is an around the clock undertaking.

The Supervising Social Worker

Each carer is allocated a Supervising Social Worker who:

- is always available for carers to contact by phone
- phones carers regularly, at least weekly, usually more often
- makes planned visits every four weeks when foster children are in the home, to monitor care, support the carer to play their part in the child's care plan and to identify anything further which will help carers
- makes additional visits and gives support, if requested by foster carers
- supports foster carers in their working relationships with the local authority and other partnership agencies, for example schools and health services
- liaises with the local authority to make sure carers get the information they need to meet to start and then continue meeting the needs of the children who have come to live with them

The Education and Support Worker

Shine Fostering has a full-time Education and Support Worker, a qualified teacher, who works closely with the Supervising Social Worker. She is responsible for:

- the training programmes and resources for foster carers
- supporting carers, to enable foster children to progress in their education
- direct work with parents in parent and child placements

Shine Nurse Consultant

What has happened to foster children before they became looked after can have enduring effects on their physical health and mental wellbeing, in childhood and adulthood.

Our Shine Nurse Consultant is a qualified nurse and mental health specialist. Her role is to help carers and children to understand how to be well and to achieve good health and wellbeing. She training and additional resources for carers.

Nominated Carers

When we recruit new carers, we also get to know the people who will be their support network. This informal support is essential to any carer, is required by the agency and complements the agency's formal support.

Nominated carers are often family members or friends in the carer's local community who can offer practical backup to the carer, for example, childcare, as well as providing emotional support for the carer. Nominated carers are DBS checked and are invited to safeguarding and other core training undertaken by foster carers.

4.8 Training

Everyone working at Shine – staff, foster carers and Panel members – completes Secure Base Model training.

In the first twelve months after approval all carers are required to provide evidence that they have completed the Department for Education Training Support and Development Standards. These standards are fundamental to fostering.

Every foster carer must complete training courses throughout their time with us. This is part of the foster care agreement. The Shine Training Policy is updated annually with the core training programme of mandatory courses for carers. Carers are also given training accounts which enable them to choose online training courses.

Training for carers and staff groups is delivered in-house and by external trainers and through individual online training accounts. The online training combines required modules, identified by the agency, and topics which the carer chooses. Personal development and continuing professional development plans for foster carers are formulated in conjunction with the Supervising Social worker and are updated in the annual review cycle.

Reflective Developmental Review

During the second year of fostering, a carer will participate in a Reflective Developmental Review. This addresses training, development and fostering targets, with a view to carers better understanding and fulfilling their potential and with that, better outcomes for children.

Working with an organisational psychologist, Shine has developed a role play workshop which uses scripted scenarios and professional actors. The carer takes part in the scenarios and is observed by the non-participant psychologist, who systematically records how the carer is interacting in the situation being played out.

The competencies report from the psychologist and collated feedback e.g. supervision materials, views of children, social workers, and other professionals, are discussed at the Reflective Developmental Review meeting between the Director, Registered Manager and foster carer.

4.9 Financial support - fees and allowances

Foster carers are paid an allowance to be spent on the child, a carer fee and an amount for household wear and tear.

Our carer fee structure rewards continuity of service. Each year, from year one to year six of service, the basic carer fee paid per child per week, increases by approximately 2.5%. When carers reach year eight, a one-off bonus payment is made to celebrate their longevity of service and commitment.

Carers also receive an annual holiday allowance when taking their foster children on holiday with them.

Carers are self-employed and responsible for their own tax arrangements. We can assist carers with information about this and sign post foster carer organisations for detailed and expert advice.

5. Our Work with Local Authorities

We provide local authorities with foster homes for children and parent and child arrangements.

5.1 Foster Care for Children and Young People

Our carers provide the following:

- short-term foster care - up to two years' duration
- bridging foster care - when a child is preparing to move to a permanent placement or adoption
- long-term / permanent foster care, until a child reaches adulthood
- emergency foster care for up to 28 days (at short notice)
- planned respite care which may last for up to 28 days as one-off or a planned series of placements (not exceeding 110 nights a year)

When a looked after child reaches eighteen, they may want to stay on with their carer. This is a staying put arrangement. It will have been prepared for, with the Local Authority taking the lead. This is not a fostering placement, but Shine will continue to offer support to the carers and the former foster child.

Local Authorities may request us to provide outreach support to former Shine foster children, who have moved to semi-independent accommodation. We undertake this and are happy to continue the relationship with our former foster children. Our engagement with former Shine foster children should always be underpinned by the agreed Local Authority Pathway Plan and be in partnership with the young person and their allocated social worker or personal advisor.

How we work with care leavers will be reviewed in 2021-22. The objectives, time-scales and protocols for this type of work will be documented and clarified. This will benefit our care leavers and enhance the partnership working between Shine Fostering and Local Authorities.

5.2 Parent and Child Arrangements

We provide pre-birth support, parenting support, and foster carer monitoring and reporting to assist the Local Authority prepare for court, concerning the futures of parent and baby.

Carers provide a safe and friendly home for both the child and the parent (or parents). It is for a short period, usually three to six months. During this time, carers observe the practical parenting capabilities of the parent and emotional availability to the child. Carers model what a good parent does and encourage the parent in their parenting role.

The progress of both child and parent is monitored and recorded in factual, non-judgemental reports which are taken into consideration when deciding what happens next for the child and the parent.

The Education and Support Worker meets every parent. She assesses the parenting resources and learning resources both parent and baby require and makes regular visits. Our Children's Mentor and the Shine Nurse Consultant also work with parent and baby.

The Supervising Social Worker makes frequent visits to the home and is in regular telephone contact with the carer. Round the clock access to social work support is available through our out of hours service. We arrange respite and ensure support by nominated carers is organised and available.

6. Working with Children and Young People

Foster carers, Shine staff and wrap around team members provide a package of core services to all our foster children. The information shared by the local authority makes us aware of the child's identity, their story, and needs. Starting from this, we get to know the young person and put together the resources and opportunities which are a good fit and will work, not just for the child but for their carers too.

6.1 Involving our Children

Our policy "Involving our Children" describes what we do to put children first and how we involve them in all aspects of their care.

Involvement starts at the very beginning of a placement with the Welcome to Shine meeting and welcome pack. The Children's Guide explains what Shine Fostering does, our commitment to children, gives simple step by step guidance for making complaints and how to get an advocate.

Throughout the time a child is with us there are many feedback processes, such as at child reviews and foster carer reviews, with the better bedrooms scheme, direct work and participation in Shine events.

6.2 Direct Work

At Shine Fostering we prioritise creating a secure base from which our foster children can flourish, through direct work which safeguards our children and acknowledges the identity and individuality of each child. This in-person contact and work with individual children, uses a variety of methods, according to the age, level of understanding and preference of the child.

The Children's Mentor and Advocate

The Children's Mentor and Advocate is a care leaver. He offers advocacy and support to all our foster children during their time with Shine Fostering. He works one-to-one with our older children, giving practical support with independence skills, tracking how they are doing, and offering mentoring as they move along their pathway.

Learning and education

The progress of each young person is closely monitored by the Education and Support Worker, who also establishes and develops relationships with the nurseries, schools and colleges attended by our foster children.

We try to find a balance of learning through creative experiences such as artwork and music, knowledge-based events such as exhibitions and outdoor activities.

The Education and Support Worker attends Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings. The young person is strongly encouraged to be an active participant and is helped to prepare for the meetings. She also supports the older children with writing their personal statements, CVs, and applications.

Health and wellbeing

The Shine Nurse will work with individual children when there are specific health concerns or there are concerns about the child's wellbeing.

Half term events

At Christmastime we have celebrations. We put our heads together with our young people to find theatre, or concerts, or other events which are going to be fun and a laugh.

The programme of half-term events varies from year to year. They provide group and one-to-one activities, all of which involve the ideas and input from the children.

Shine Holidays

We believe that every child should understand and feel good about their identity, discover their aspirations, and be excited about the future. Creating new memories and adding to the child's story is a positive process which strengthens the child's sense of identity, for the present and into the future. We contribute to this through our activities and events for children.

We organise short activity holidays. Foster children and Shine staff travel to activity centres in rural and coastal locations such as the Isle of Man and the beautiful Welsh countryside. These holidays are all about new experiences and enjoying life.

Summer Camping Weekend

The camping weekend in Epping Forest is the start of summer at Shine. The weekend is a whole agency event. It is packed with sports, arts, music, making and doing for foster children, carers, children of carers, Shine staff and Panel members and families.

7. Checking What We Do

We undertake monitoring and auditing at the agency, which is designed to check that Shine Fostering complies with legal requirements, national minimum standards, our own policies and procedures. We also ask if our work is good enough or could be better.

Quality assurance at Shine has a framework which is a map and schedule of formal and informal monitoring and feedback processes, sources of quality assurance information, roles, and responsibilities. The agency's database has been designed to link our work to regulations, standards and policies and to produce monitoring reports for the organisation.

In addition to these internal processes, our Fostering Panel provides us with extensive feedback on the quality of what we do and recommendations for change and improvement. Our training events generate formal quality assurance feedback. Through our direct work with children we hear their views about many aspects of their lives and foster care.

8. Whistleblowing

Staff, carers, and other people involved with the agency must feel they are able to raise their concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in any aspect of Shine Fostering's work.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 applies to employees, but at Shine Fostering it is our policy to extend these principles to foster carers (who are self-employed), their family and support network, panel members and consultants.