

Original artwork by Shine Fostering's Suky Grewal and Shine foster children



shine
fostering

Statement of Purpose

This edition: November 2018



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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 November 2018.

1.1 We Are an Independent Fostering Agency

Shine Fostering is an independent fostering agency. We have been registered with Ofsted since March 2013. At both our inspections by Ofsted, in December 2013 and June 2017, we have been rated as good providers.

Shine is a small but growing fostering service with carers in Greater London, East Anglia and the West Midlands. 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, take up learning opportunities and acquire new skills during their time with the agency.

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

Our contact details

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

1.2 Our Values

Our values should find expression in everything we do.

Integrity

We try our very best to do what we say 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 are truthful and we do 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, and in our carers, our working partners and our foster children.

Openness

We do not keep people in the dark. 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.

Being reflective, learning and improving

Our practice is reflective. We listen and respond to each other, our foster children, our carers, the Fostering Panel and our working partners. We pursue service improvement, through our quality assurance, our supervision systems and whole agency events.

We learn from and incorporate research into what we do. We draw on the expertise of independent consultants.

1.3 Our Vision

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

This is our aspiration on behalf of foster children and foster carers. It is also a declaration of how we will work with everyone involved in the lives of the children living in Shine foster families. Our policy "*Involving our Children*" describes what we do to put children first and how we involve them in all aspects of their care.

1.4 Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children is at the heart of what we do. It is the responsibility of everyone at Shine Fostering to keep our children safe and well and to equip every child to make good choices, now and in the future. We take nothing for granted.

Child Protection and Managing Allegations

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 Service Manager 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.

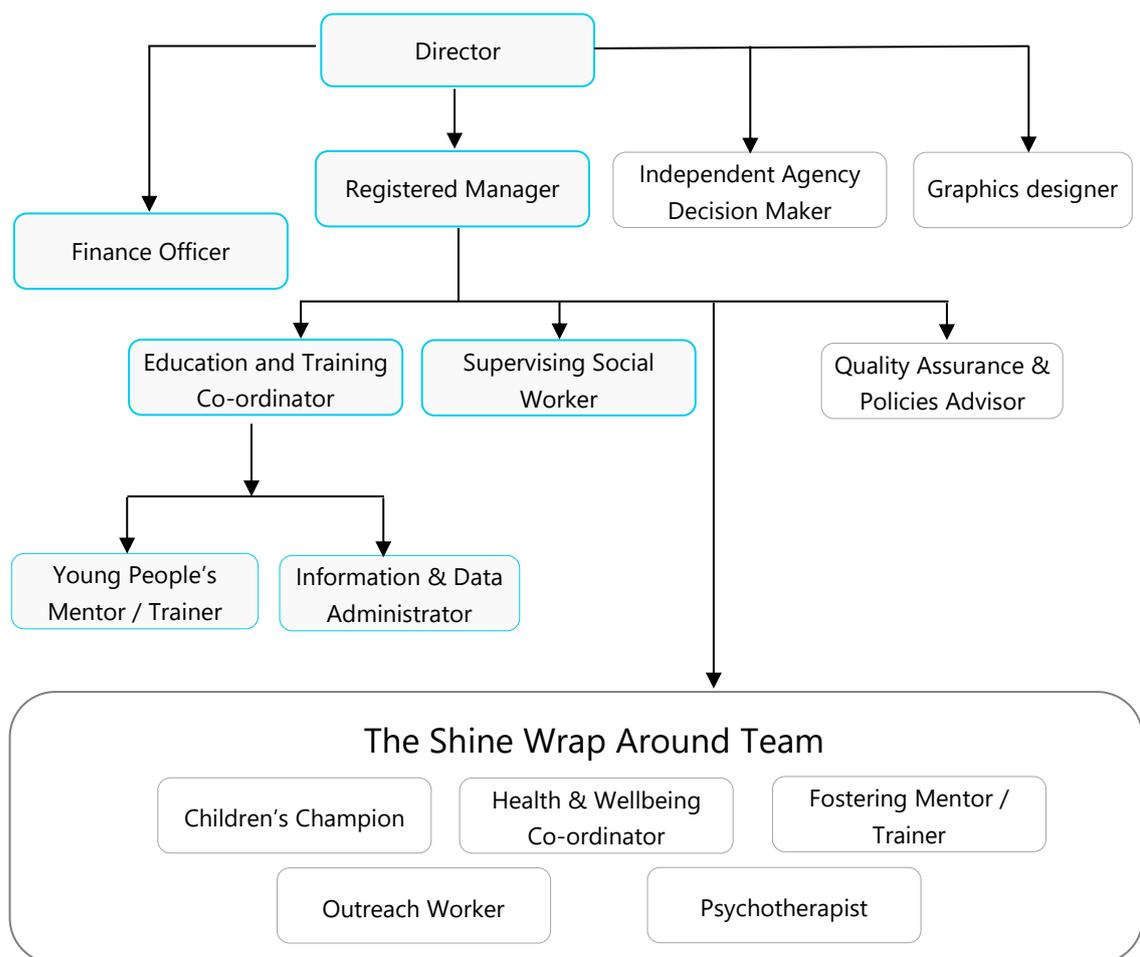
1.5 Equality and Diversity

Shine Fostering is committed to treating all individuals fairly. This is one of our founding values. The agency follows equal opportunities policies in the recruitment and treatment of staff and foster carers, and in the delivery of services to children.

All foster carers and staff will receive training on equality and diversity practice and expectations. We monitor our recruitment and employment activities and seek feedback from carers and children about our fostering agency. We learn from this and it shapes what we do.



People and Organisation



Legend



Shine staff



Consultants and part-time support workers

The organisational chart summarises the agency's staffing arrangements of highly qualified and experienced social workers and administrators.

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 ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded, our recruitment is governed by the agency's policy and procedures for safer recruitment. Enhanced DBS checks and references are required for everyone who works in whatever capacity for Shine Fostering. Everyone is required to hold appropriate qualifications and have experience which is relevant to the work they are undertaking.



Our Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of Shine Fostering is to recruit, train and support foster carers who have a genuine interest in and a special ability to care for our amazing children.

Every child who comes to live in a Shine foster family:

- should expect to be recognised and treated as a person, full of potential, not as a problem;
- have their day to day needs met by being placed 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 shown respect by everyone at the agency and be responsive to the child's individuality;

- 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 which affects their lives;
- 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.



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 in and around London, East Anglia and the West Midlands. We recruit our carers from these diverse, ever evolving, communities.

We cannot overstate the challenge of finding 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, yes, life-changing.

We do not discriminate on any grounds and our recruitment process is open to anyone who is over 21 and can meet these basic requirements:

- a spare bedroom;
- have not committed a serious offence;
- at least one carer to be at home;
- ideally experience of caring for children and young people;
- demonstrate a desire to learn, to acquire new skills and capacity to put what has been learned into practice;
- willingness to engage with others;
- a caring personality and ability to empathise;
- a wealth of life experiences;
- insight into and understanding of the importance of a happy, positive and loving childhood;
- a commitment to the in-depth process of foster carer assessment.

4.2 Assessment of Foster Carers

Establishing the suitability of applicants involves an in-depth and probing assessment process. Applicants participate in a series of visits to the home by the assessing social worker, who has specialist Form F skills. 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.

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 reports.

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 Role of the Fostering Panel

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.

Our Fostering Panel central list draws on people from many different walks of life and who represent the demographic diversity of the areas in which we work. We also have care leavers on the Panel list.

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.

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 first approval and subsequent reviews of approval, carers agree and sign a Foster Care Agreement, which sets out all their duties and requirements. It lasts for one year and is reviewed, renewed and signed each year.

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:

- 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 Co-ordinator;
- outreach worker support;
- fostering mentor support;
- flexible arrangements where carers need a break;
- membership of the Fostering Network and New Family Social;
- membership of the National Association of Therapeutic Parents;
- foster carer support group meetings;
- 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 not feel alone or isolated in the work they undertake. We are here for them.

The Supervising Social Worker

Each carer is allocated a Supervising Social Worker who:

- phones regularly, at least once a week and usually more often;
- makes planned visits every four weeks when foster children are in the home, to monitor the standards of care, support the carer to play their part in the child's care plan and to identify anything further which will add to their effectiveness as 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 providers;

- 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 Fostering Mentor

In 2016 the agency responded to feedback from our foster carers and recruited an experienced foster carer to the role Fostering Mentor.

The Fostering Mentor role is to support foster carers to provide security and stability for children in their care through:

- regular telephone support at agreed times;
- facilitating support groups.
- supporting carers to develop reflective their practice;
- assisting and supporting carers in the attainment of Personal Development targets and Training, Support and Development Standards competencies;
- delivering Skills to Foster Training in the preparation of fostering applicants.

The Education Co-ordinator

Shine Fostering has a full-time Education Co-ordinator , a qualified teacher, who works closely with the Supervising Social Worker. The co-ordinator supports carers individually and collectively by developing and managing the agency's training programmes,

The Education Co-ordinator also facilitates individual training opportunities and supports carers in promoting the educational engagement and achievement of their foster children.

Health and Healthy Living Co-ordinator

What has happened to foster children before they became looked after can have enduring effects on many aspects of their wellbeing, from childhood and on through adulthood.

Our Health and Healthy Living Co-ordinator is a qualified nurse and mental health specialist. Her role is to support foster families as they explore how they can boost the health and wellbeing of the foster child.

Nominated Carers and Support Network

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, child care, as well as providing emotional support for the carer.

4.8 Training

Every foster carer must attend and complete training throughout their time with us. This requirement is included in the foster care agreement which is renewed and signed annually by each carer.

In the first twelve months after approval all carers are required to provide evidence that the Department for Education Training Support and Development Standards have been attained. These standards continue to be significant, structuring the annual carer review and in the monthly reports where carers must demonstrate how they are putting the standards into practice.

Each carer's training and development needs are identified in the annual review process. Each carer has a Personal Development Plan and a Continuing Professional Development Plan.

Training is delivered to carers and staff groups by in-house and external trainers and through individual online training accounts. The online training combines required modules, identified by the agency, and topics which the carer chooses.

4.9 Financial support - fees and allowances

Foster carers are paid fees and allowances which reflect the nature and tasks of fostering. There is an allowance for the child, a fee to the carer and an amount for household wear and tear.

In October 2018 a tier system for foster carer fees was introduced. All carers receive Tier 1 fees but can progress to the higher level of fees at Tier 2.

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 recommend the Fostering Network for detailed support and expert advice.



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.
- 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).

5.2 Parent and Child Arrangements

Experienced 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. These are taken into consideration by the courts, if involved, and the local authority when deciding what happens next for the child and the parent.

These arrangements can be intense and very demanding for our carers. 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 network carers is organised and available.

The Shine Supervising Social Worker is in constant contact with the local authority, providing feedback and ensuring everyone is adhering to the placement agreement.



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. But this is just a beginning. 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 Support and Opportunities for Foster Children

The agency prioritises relationships with children, events and experiences - we are an extended family. In 2017 the agency launched its fundraising programme and crowdfunding with a view to expanding the range of activities, events and opportunities for our foster children. The programme is ongoing and developing.

Staying safe and feeling valued

Children are welcomed to Shine Fostering by our Children's Champion. As a child she was fostered too. The young person can choose where to meet, to be in a place where they feel at ease. The Children's Champion brings a Welcome Bag along for the young person, rights are explained, reassurance is given that they have a voice and will be listened to and respected.

The Young People's Mentor is also a care leaver. He offers advocacy and support to all our foster children during their time with Shine Fostering and takes a special interest in supporting our care leavers and young people in the 16-17 age group. He is also involved in raising foster carer awareness about fostering and the transitional phase of leaving care to independent living.

We believe that every child should understand their life story, discover their aspirations and feel excited about the future. Our carers receive training in life story work.

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. This can be particularly important for children who have little or no contact with their family. For children whose care plans embrace continuing contact with their families, the agency and our foster carers support the maintenance of positive links with the families.

Learning

The progress of each young person is closely monitored by the Education Co-ordinator, who also establishes and develop relationships with the nurseries, schools and colleges attended by our foster children.

The Co-ordinator 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. They are opportunities to benefit from the additional support available to a child in care. For core subjects such as English and Mathematics, the Education Co-ordinator will identify and offer resources and choices for the young person to take up.

The children and young people are consulted about educational and recreational events which we arrange every year. We try to find a balance of learning through creative experiences such as art work and music, knowledge-based events such as exhibitions and outdoor activities such as Parkour.

All foster children receive the Who Cares magazine.

Shine Holidays

In July 2018 Shine staff and foster children flew to the Isle of Man for a short activity holiday. This was the first Shine Holiday and everyone is excited by the holidays we will now have every year.

Summer Camping Weekend

Every summer there is a camping weekend in Epping Forest. There are sports, arts and crafts, bouncy castle, music and activities for foster children, carers, children of carers, Shine staff and Panel members and families.

Half term and summer events

At the Christmas period we have a celebration. We put our heads together with our young people for find theatre, or concerts, or other events to go to which are going to be fun and a laugh.

During all the half-term breaks there are outings or trips to activity centres. In the last two years we have “Gone Ape” in the tree-top rope walks at Battersea Park, learned Parkour skills at our summer picnic in Hyde Park and at The Queen Elizabeth II Park.



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.

The written records of our foster carers are a key quality assurance process.



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.