



# Statement of Purpose

**In 2014 Alpha Plus was rated Outstanding by Ofsted.**

**We continue to strive on a daily basis  
to meet these exacting standards.**

**Ofsted described the agency as:**

**“An outstanding child centered service  
that young people benefit from”.**



# Contents

<b>Introductions to the Fostering Provider</b>	<b>4</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Agency's Status and Constitution</li><li>• Name and Address of Registered Manager</li><li>• Name and Address of Responsible Individual</li><li>• Name &amp; Address of Inspector Body – Ofsted</li><li>• Service Location</li></ul>	
<b>The Agency's Structure</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Aims, Objectives and Principles of Alpha Plus</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Alpha Plus Standards of Care</b>	<b>9</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anti-discriminatory Practice</li></ul>	
<b>Alpha Plus Services and Facilities</b>	<b>11</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Placement Services</li><li>• The Foster Care Agreement</li><li>• Other Services Offered by the Agency to Local Authorities and the Child</li><li>• Services Available to Carers and Children in Placement</li><li>• Children's Workforce Development Council – Standards for Foster Carers</li></ul>	
<b>Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers</b>	<b>15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• Assessment of Prospective Carers</li><li>• Approval</li><li>• Review and Terminations of Approval</li></ul>	
<b>Fees</b>	<b>17</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agency Fees</li><li>• Carers' Fees</li><li>• A Statement of the Agency's Financial Position</li></ul>	
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Complaints and Compliments</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Alpha Plus Statistics</b>	<b>21</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alpha Plus Foster Carers</li></ul>	



# Introduction to the Fostering Provider

Alpha Plus Fostering is one of a number of fostering agencies owned and managed by the National Fostering Agency Partnerships Limited (“NFAG”), an associate company of National Fostering Agency Holdings Limited. Ultimately NFAG are responsible for the whole organisation, though day to day operational responsibility lies with the Registered Manager.

Alpha Plus aims through its foster carers, to provide a safe, stable, caring and comfortable home enabling young people to make attachments and gain a sense of ‘belonging’, or within which the task of the placement can be achieved.

Emphasis is placed on helping young people to understand and/or resolve the problems that created the initial need for care and, by partnership with the placing local authority, ensuring that the young person’s physical, mental, emotional and educational welfare and development are promoted and safeguarded.

The values underpinning the work of Alpha Plus are embedded in the Statement and within the working practices of the organisation. These are:

- Being child centred
- Being flexible, adapting to new ideas and ways of working and being responsive to individuals needs
- A commitment to learning and continuous improvement
- Listening to children & their families
- A commitment to equality and diversity
- A commitment to partnership working with children, local authorities and where appropriate parents

Alpha Plus is continuing to grow and develop throughout the North West and increasingly, beyond.

This Statement of Purpose replaces the previous Statement of Purpose and is submitted for approval to the Registered Individual and is revised and updated annually. As and when this document and other information related to the service are updated, revised copies are sent to foster carers, Ofsted and the Local Authorities of the young people placed, any child subject to age and understanding placed with Alpha Plus. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority Social Worker to ensure parents are given a copy of the revised edition, and we remind them of this, since as a provider we do not have their contact details. The Statement of Purpose has been compiled in accordance with Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards and Regulation 4 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

## The Agency’s Status and Constitution

The agency was originally established as Alpha Plus Fostering, an independent fostering agency, in 2000 and underwent a change of status in 2007 to become Alpha Plus Fostering Limited. In April 2009 there was a change of ownership of the agency when Alpha Plus Fostering Limited became part of National Fostering Agency Partnerships Limited (“NFAG”), an associate company of National Fostering Agency Holdings Limited.

The agency continues to offer Local Authorities a quality childcare service through the provision of foster placements, which reflect the wide range of needs of looked-after children. The agency remains strongly

committed to child-centred policies and practice and employ a holistic approach to childcare. All services comply with statutory requirements.

## Name and Address of Registered Manager

### Name

Alpha Plus Fostering

### Address

Chambers Business Centre, Chapel Road,  
Oldham OL8 4QQ

### Telephone

T: 0161 633 2240

### Fax

F: 0161 620 6052

### E-mail

info@alphaplusfostering.co.uk

### Registered Manager (in Application)

Gill Gilgun

## Name and Address of Responsible Individual

### Name

Iain Anderson

### Address

Frays Court, 71 Cowley Road, Uxbridge,  
Middlesex, UB8 2AE

### Telephone

0845 200 300

### Fax

01895 200 222

### E-mail

info@nfa.co.uk

### Responsible Individual

Iain Anderson

## Name & Address of Inspector Body – Ofsted

All the activities of Alpha Plus Fostering are inspected and regulated by Ofsted who can be contacted at the following address:-

### Name

Regulatory Inspector

### Address

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

### Telephone

0300 123 1231

### Email

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The agency operates as an independent fostering agency (Company Number: 06019106) and is registered with and inspected by OFSTED – Registration Number SC069335. This agency received an outstanding OFSTED rating in November 2010 and has retained this over the last 6 years.

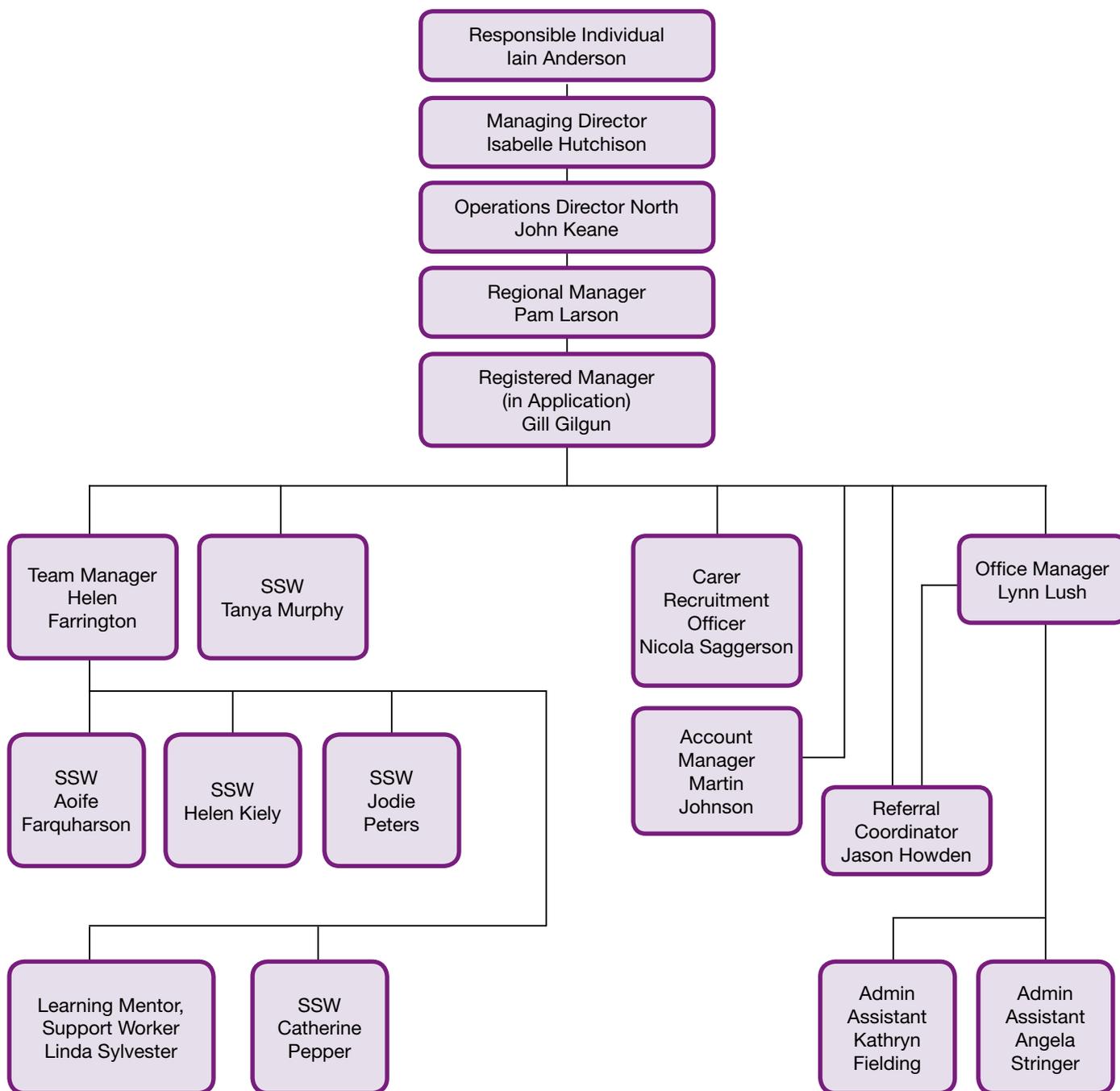
### The agency is a full member of FosterTalk.

## Service Location

The service is situated in Oldham and is ideally suited for road and rail links, being close to the M60, M67 and M62 networks. The premises are situated in a converted Mill just off Junction 22 of the M60 and have rooms available for foster carer training, panels and support groups. There is a young people's room from which the children and young people's groups and family contact can take place.



# The Agency's Structure



The agency is managed by a Registered Manager who reports to the Regional Manager of the National Fostering Agency Partnerships Limited (“NFAAG”), through monthly meetings.

In managing the agency, the Registered Manager ensures that:

- The agency works within the Regulations and Standards contained in the Care Standards Act 2000, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and the Fostering Services Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The agency’s policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed on an annual basis
- The effective control and supervision of the agency’s activities
- The service is delivered within the statutory framework and according to accepted standards of good practice and codes of conduct
- There is access to relevant medical, financial, professional and legal support
- There are sufficient resources made available to meet carer’s needs and promote the safety and welfare of the child
- The management group share responsibility for developing policy and procedures, in line with national regulations and standards, to ensure a safe and stimulating environment for Looked After Children
- Team meetings are held regularly and attended by senior managers

All social work staff employed by Alpha Plus holds a recognised social work qualification, and are registered with HCPC. Alpha Plus Fostering carries out background checks on all staff employed or commissioned by the company in accordance with the National Care Standards Act 2000 (National Minimum Fostering Standards). Further qualifications include:

- CMI level 4 in management
- BA (Hons)
- BTEC Social Care Degree in Youth and Community studies.
- Theraplay
- NVQ3 – Children and Young People
- Diploma Learning Mentor
- Experience in autism
- DipSW
- PQ1
- MA Social Work

The agency are committed to providing placements for student social workers. Any placement of a student will follow the agency’s recruitment and employment process.

In September 2016 Alpha Plus Fostering Service was awarded Gold in Investors In People award; the assessor commented:

‘There is a real sense of commitment an engagement from the whole team – staff and carers – with everyone talking very positively about how they are managed and developed is helping them to improve their own performance and, with it the performance of the whole organisation’ (IIP 2013/14)



# The Aims, Objectives and Principles of Alpha Plus

## Our Vision

**“More than just a Fostering Provider”**

### The primary aims and objectives of the agency are:

To provide a high quality service for looked after children and young people of all ages whose needs have been assessed by the responsible Local Authority as being best met by placement with a foster carer:

- To ensure children and young people are only placed with carers who have been recruited, assessed, approved and reviewed in accordance with statutory regulation and national standards and guidance
- To support, supervise and provide on-going training to carers so that they are able to provide a comprehensive service that addresses the physical, emotional, educational and health needs of the children and young people placed with them
- To promote positively the concept of fostering
- To bring together carers who will support, educate and inform each other and who will work in partnership with all relevant professionals and families involved in the child's life

### In seeking to achieve these objectives, the agency's work is underpinned by the following:

- The belief that fostering is a positive service to children and families
- A commitment to child-centred policies and practices
- The need to employ a holistic approach to childcare
- Respect for the role of carers as partners in a professional team
- The need to support partnership and co-operative working between all those involved in working with the child and the child's family



# Alpha Plus Standards of Care

The agency is committed to the delivery of a service meeting the standards of care detailed below, which are compatible with statutory and regulatory requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and the Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments, England) Regulations 2015 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 amended 2013. The agency is inspected on a regular basis by OFSTED and copies of inspection reports are available from OFSTED or available on the agency's website. The messages from Every Child Matters are also incorporated into agency delivery and planning of services and monitoring of performance.

In pursuit of its stated aims and objectives the agency will employ policies, practices, procedures which seek at all times:

- To ensure the provision of high quality care to children and young people in a safe, healthy and nurturing family setting
- To meet the individual child's particular needs and promote their best interests, in accordance with the care plan
- To protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation
- To value diversity and promote equality, by recognising the importance of a child's ethnic origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background
- To develop the child's sense of identity and self-worth
- To consider fully a child's gender, sexuality and any disability they may have
- To promote the child's health and well being, including their physical, mental and emotional welfare
- To promote educational achievement and attainment
- To promote and support agreed contact with the child's family and friends, in accordance with the care plan
- To prepare the child for adult life through the development of relevant life skills and acquisition of the knowledge necessary to achieve this
- To seek the opinions of children, their families and carers so that they can inform the planning and delivery of the agency's services
- To recruit individuals and families from all parts of the community and with different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, who can bring a variety of life experiences to the fostering task, thereby enabling the agency to offer local authorities a range of placements, reflecting the wide range of children's needs
- To achieve consistently high standards when recruiting and assessing carers
- To have a properly constituted and independent Panel to consider assessments and make recommendations to the agency regarding the award, review, rejection or termination of approvals
- To ensure consistency and continuity in the supervision, support and information carers receive
- To provide properly resourced training that enables carers to develop their skills and knowledge so as to better meet the needs of children placed with them
- To offer placements that carefully match the particular needs of the child to the carer's skills, experiences and circumstances so as to minimise the occurrence of inappropriate placements and the attendant risk of placement breakdown and poor outcomes for children



# Alpha Plus Standards of Care continued

- To provide compensatory support to placements where necessary
- To be a responsible and competent employer
- To ensure the agency is organisationally sound and properly structured
- To have procedures in place to control and supervise the agency's activities
- To have arrangements in place to control and supervise the agency's finances, which are based on sound financial principles and recognised good practice
- To organise and manage the agency's resources effectively to ensure the best possible service delivery and the safety of children
- To recruit and employ an adequate number of appropriately experienced and qualified staff, who are able meet the needs of carers and children placed with them
- To organise, manage and supervise agency staff so as to ensure their accountability and provide them with effective support
- To maintain the skill and knowledge base of agency staff, managers and panel members by providing effective training and staff development programmes
- To monitor and review agency policies, procedures and practice on a regular basis
- To implement administrative procedures and practices so that management and staff are able to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner
- To maintain secure, separate and accurate records for children, carers and staff and ensure access to such records, in line with legislation

## Anti-discriminatory Practice

Alpha Plus's Diversity Policy applies to staff, foster carers and young people. Training is provided to all staff and carers to assist them to understand and value diversity in working with colleagues and service users. Alpha Plus values and celebrates diversity and provides a detailed policy and guidance on promoting equal opportunities for "looked after" children.

The Service considers the needs of all young people referred in the areas of race, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, ability and geographic origin. The service will endeavour to promote each young person's sense of identity through making appropriate placements, and direct work in relation to a young person's cultural background. Alpha Plus facilitates Black and Ethnic Minority Children's Support Groups once a year.

There is a commitment to challenging individuals or groups who discriminate against any of our young people in anyway and diversity is celebrated through daily living experiences and educational programmes.

The service continues to work actively to promote diversity within the composition of the staff team and approved foster carers of the Fostering Provider.



# Alpha Plus Services and Facilities

## Placement Services

Alpha Plus will discuss any request for a placement with the local authority's referral placements team having statutory responsibility for the child or young person. Such referrals will be processed in accordance with the responsible authority's procedure for making referrals and agreeing placements. The agency provides the following types of placement.

### Mainstream Fostering:

- Emergency Placements are provided at short notice and supported by a 24 hour emergency response service
- Bridging Placements are a short term, flexible placement, focussing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child into and from the placement
- Short Term Placements can be providing care for a few days, weeks or months while plans are being made for the child's long term future
- Long Term Placements are where foster carers provide permanent care for a child up to and into adult independence where adoption is not an option
- Permanency is a term used when we offer substantially reduced rates to Local Authorities to promote and encourage permanent placements and a stable home for life
- Sibling Placements are placements where siblings are either placed together or separately with us facilitating contact between siblings
- Single Placements have highly experienced carers looking after children and young people who have very complex needs and/or challenging behaviour

- Respite Breaks are where foster carers provide a break for parents and additional support where their own support networks are lacking. This can be an overnight stay or a couple of weeks
- Unaccompanied Children are placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Support packages include immigration; supporting religious, languages and cultural needs; integration with community and faith groups
- Specialist Fostering known as Placement Plus provides placements to children who have complex needs and would benefit from a more specialist service or a solo placement with an experience carer
- Parent & Child Placements provide a safe and supportive placement to a parent & children. Some parent & child placements can also be an assessment placement where Alpha Plus staff and carers assess the parenting capacity

The agency has recruited carers who are able to offer a flexible service and will only propose placements with carers who have been properly assessed and approved, in accordance with statutory requirements.

The agency believes that children, their families, carers, the agency and local authorities are vital components in the placement process, with each partner having an important role to perform.

### Matching Process

Referrals are initially received by the Referral Coordinator who liaises closely with the social work team, local authority colleagues and foster carers, to ensure that the child's needs will be fully met through the best possible match.



# Alpha Plus Services and Facilities continued

The agency expects the responsible authority, in all cases, to provide sufficient and relevant information to enable the matching process to begin and allow an informed choice to be made. The agency will also provide relevant information (including Form F's and other approval or review documentation) to the responsible authority, and will liaise with them in order to identify a carer able to meet the needs of the child or children concerned, having regard to the terms of approval and the current circumstances of the carer(s). It is this matching process, together with the support offered by the agency, which gives the best chance of a successful outcome for all concerned. As part of the matching process Alpha Plus ensures:

- Children and young people will never be expected to share a bedroom with another fostered child or child of the foster carer, other than where they are siblings or a request is made by the responsible authority.
- All placement decisions are overseen by the Registered Manager/Team Manager to ensure we have made the best possible match for the child and foster carer. This is Risk assessed.

At the point of placement or the first planning meeting, the responsible authority is expected to provide the agency with more detailed information, including copies of appropriate LAC documentation and, where available, the child's Personal and/or Education Plan if available. This information will be shared as appropriate with the carer to enable them to look after the child(ren) and meet their needs in the most effective way.

Prior to a placement being made, the agency will liaise with the responsible authority

regarding their responsibility in drawing up a Foster Placement Agreement which confirms the roles and clarifies specific expectations of all parties involved.

The agency expects to contribute to all meetings concerning any child placed through the agency and will provide reports for such meetings.

The agency provides written information about its services to local authorities, copies of which are available on request.

## The Foster Care Agreement

Each carer signs a Foster Carer Agreement with the agency. This sets out the terms of their relationship with Alpha Plus, including any conditions attached to their approval; mechanisms for reviewing and, if necessary, terminating approval; appeal mechanisms and complaints; clarification on the role and responsibilities of all those involved in placing a child; circumstances about which the agency must be notified; the agency's expectations of the carers and the services they in turn can expect to receive from the agency.

## Other Services Offered by the Agency to Local Authorities and the Child

The agency offers a range of placements to enable responsible authorities to extend their options in order to meet the needs of a child requiring placement. This includes:

- Support with contact arrangements (for example, supervision and transport)

- Access to the agency's Learning Mentor. This can be used to support individual children requiring additional help in school or who have been or are in danger of being excluded from mainstream education. The Learning Mentor liaises and works with carers, the responsible authority, LEA and school, to achieve educational entitlement and social inclusion for the child, in accordance with any Individual and Personal Education Plans. The service also provides a Resource Library for carers and on line educational support which provides access to the National Curriculum. As of March 2017 97.8% of children in placement attended a school or college placement and stability rate for attendance was 98%
- Promotion of the child's health and welfare through accessing relevant services; ensuring children are registered with GP's and Dentists and that carers take a proactive role in prioritising all health issues which are age appropriate
- Access to health and child care consultants who will, with the agreement and support of the placing authority, offer individual support to children in placement or advice to their carers
- Advocacy for and consultation with children
- The use of the agency's standardised documents and proformas; including an Individual Placement Agreement and the associated terms and conditions of service setting out the basic contractual terms and conditions ahead of any placement being made; a Personal Education Plan including age-appropriate feedback forms for children

## Services Available to Carers and Children in Placement

Each child placed receives a copy of the Children's Guide which details the services they can expect from the agency and information on how to make a complaint. This is presented in a format that is child friendly and copies are available on request. Copies are also available in Polish, Urdu and Slovakian. These Guides (for older and younger children) were updated in September 2013 following consultation with the young people's forum. All children are asked to contribute to their carer's reviews on age appropriate forms.

Before beginning the formal assessment, all prospective carers receives a brochure explaining what is involved in the fostering task, what will be expected of them and information about the assessment, approval and review process. A home visit is then arranged to discuss the process in more detail. A copy of the brochure provided is available on request.

Recruitment, training, assessment, management and support of families is offered in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations 2011 amended 2013 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Providers. All Alpha Plus foster carers become individual members of FosterTalk at the point of approval.



## Alpha Plus Services and Facilities continued

Alpha Plus aims to enhance and support families in the task of providing consistently high quality care for young people. In so doing it is hoped to help them achieve harmonious living and positive relationships with the young people they care for and a rewarding experience of fostering. Support provided includes:

- Regular supervision
- Training
- Out of hours 24 hour social work support
- Social Events
- Educational support
- Children support group
- Black children's support group
- Newsletters
- Access to National groups organizations for Looked after Children and Young people
- Practical assistance with contact/transport etc.
- Support with life story work/adoption activity days
- Interpreter services
- Participation Groups

A comprehensive training programme is available to all the agency's carers, based on their identified needs including Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care. The agency provides attachments workshops to new carers and experienced carers to develop their knowledge of attachments. The workshops are facilitated by a qualified Play Therapist.

Training is organised either internally or through external training providers. A crèche facility is provided to allow carers with daytime childcare commitments to attend training.

Additionally the agency organises specialist training/support. This currently comprises a Male Foster Carers Group and support groups, including an evening group and a single carers support group. A children's forum facilitated and run by a children's ambassador is also in place and provides the opportunity for fostered children and birth children to contribute to the running of the service.

### **Children's Workforce Development Council – Standards for Foster Carers**

The Children's Workforce Development Council launched the Training, Support and Development Standards for foster carers in May 2007 (refreshed 2012). Approved foster carers need to demonstrate that they have met the standards within 12 months of approval.

Alpha Plus has implemented a programme of training and workshops for both foster carers and Supervising Social Workers to ensure all carers are able to achieve the standards in the required timescales.



# Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers

## Recruitment

The skills required of foster carers are varied and often wide-ranging and this is reflected in the diversity of people who become Alpha Plus carers. The agency recruits individuals and families from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and from all parts of the community, who can bring a variety of life experiences to the fostering task.

Alpha Plus is, strongly committed to ensuring carers receive a high level of support. Prospective carers are provided with accurate and realistic information about the fostering tasks and are made aware that fostering can be both time consuming and demanding. Written information is provided in the Foster Carers' Brochure and a visit from a qualified SW prior to being accepted on a training programme is conducted to ensure foster carer have the skills required and the motivation to foster a child.

## Assessment of Prospective Carers

All assessments are conducted in accordance with Fostering guidelines.

All candidates must:

- Complete a standard application form and provide comprehensive details about themselves and members of their household
- Provide details of any ex-partners with whom they have jointly parented a child unless there are exceptional circumstances to indicate this is inappropriate. Under new practice guidelines the agency is required to interview any ex-partners as part of the assessment process. We will also need to interview any children living at home with you and adult children who live away from your household

- Give their agreement for the required statutory checks to be undertaken
- Agree to undertake a medical with their GP, the results of which are sent to our medical advisor, who then advises the agency whether or not the applicant is medically fit to foster
- Provide the names of two referees who can provide an independent view of the applicant's abilities and suitability of the household
- Give their agreement to an employer's reference being sought by the agency

All assessments are conducted by a qualified Social Worker registered with the Health Care Professional Council, who then prepares a written report covering:

- The applicant's motivation in wanting to be a foster carer
- Their capabilities and competencies
- The feelings, views and involvement of other household members, including the applicant's children
- Any existing demands made on the applicant
- The suitability of the accommodation and if the home meets the regulatory health and safety standards, as well as the agency's additional requirements, e.g. that the house is sufficiently large for the child to have their own bedroom

## Approval

All assessments are considered by a properly constituted and independent Panel, which makes recommendations to the agency regarding the suitability of the applicant to be a foster carer. This may include any additional terms that the Panel considers should apply.



# Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers continued

The agency decision maker takes full account of the Panel's recommendations when reaching her decision. Prospective carers are asked to attend the Panel. The Agency undertakes competency based first reviews based on National Guidelines and Standards.

All successful applicants are provided with a Foster Care Agreement, confirming their appointment as an agency carer. It also gives details about the terms of approval and how this will be reviewed, as well as the role of the local authority making the placement.

Foster carers have access to a comprehensive fostering handbook on approval. The handbook contains information and procedures in all aspects of the fostering task and is updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document. Foster carers are expected to maintain records of events and information pertaining to the child or young person in placement. Training is provided to ensure recording meets exacting standards.

## Review and Terminations of Approval

The Agency reviews carer approval to ensure that the carer and their household continue to be suitable, in line with statutory requirements. The review is conducted by an Independent Reviewing Officer at the agency's offices annually, or whenever the agency considers it necessary, for example, if there are changes in the composition of the household or changes in the carer's health or a serious complaint or allegation of abuse has been made against the carer or member of their household. The agency may only propose to amend a foster carer's terms of approval following a review in accordance

with Regulation 28 (2) of the Fostering Services Regulations amended 2013. Where a change of approval is a recommendation the foster carer and the agency must be in agreement with the changes to a foster carer's approval. All reviews are presented to Alpha Plus Fostering Panel, in some cases foster carers would be asked to attend panel. Where a change of approval is proposed the agency must issue a 'qualifying determination'.

For all reviews a full report will be prepared by the agency Social Worker and contributions from the child's Social Worker and the LAC will also be requested. Foster carers will be given copies of the above to read.

The review provides an opportunity for the agency and carer to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. It takes account of:

- Enquiries made and information obtained by the agency
- The outcomes of any placements made since the last review
- Training undertaken by the carer and support given
- The views of the Carer and members of their household and any child who is or has been placed during the previous 12 months, as well as the views of the responsible authority or authorities
- Updates on statutory medical and DBS checks (at least once every three years)
- Any concerns, complaints or compliments the carers may have about the agency



# Fees

## Agency Fees

The Agency operates to the Framework Contract for Independent Fostering agencies. This ensures fees are transparent and inclusive. The Agency Fee Schedule incorporates discounts for long-term and sibling placements.

Any additional services required in order to meet a child's particular needs and circumstances, over and above those outlined in a contract, are negotiated and agreed with the responsible authority at the point of placement or at subsequent reviews. This could include, for example, additional educational support, specialised equipment for a child with disabilities and other exceptional or major expenses as well as ongoing therapeutic input from one of the professionals working with the agency.

The fees structure is re-assessed annually and takes effect from 1st April.

## Carers' Fees

The financial remuneration offered to agency carers reflects the demands of the task and quality of service carers are expected to offer. Out of their fee, carers are expected to meet the routine cost of looking after a child. Further details are available on request and are always included with the foster carers agreement.

## A Statement of the Agency's Financial Position

The agency's income is generated entirely by fees paid by the local authorities for placements with agency carers for looked after children. These fees are detailed in the agency's Schedule of Fees.

The agency's expenditure comprises fees to foster carers, staff salaries and the expenses associated with the running of the service. There is also a commitment to improving and enhancing services to carers and children.

Accounts are available for inspection on request.

The most recent accounts to March 2017 indicate that the Agency has a sound financial base and remains viable.



# Insurance

Alpha Plus has an insurance package (arranged through the National Fostering Agency Group) which is fully comprehensive and covers all the agency's activities and legal obligations. It is based on Fostering Network standards and covers both carers and the agency, as follows:

- Employer's Liability (£10 million)
- Public/Products Liability (including abuse) (£5 million)
- Professional Indemnity (including medical malpractice) (£5 million)
- Accidental or Wilful Damage by the Foster Child to Foster Carers Property (£0.5 million any one placement)
- Service Users Effects (5K per placement, limited to £25k in aggregate)

The Foster Carer's insurance is provided by Market UK Limited Insurance Group via DE Ford Insurance Brokers. Premiums are paid by the agency although carers are required to have their own household contents insurance and are advised about the information they need to pass on to their insurers about their carer role. However, the agency will meet any excess on the individual carer's household contents policy in the event of a claim arising from the child's circumstances, needs or actions except where it is agreed otherwise.



# Complaints and Compliments

Alpha Plus Fostering Provider endeavours to strive for the highest standards for all its service users. Subsequently, we are committed to providing the best possible advice for children, carers and local authorities alike.

In accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 amended 2015, National Minimum Standards, and based on the documents, 2006 Getting the Best from Complaints – social care complaints and representation for children, young people and others (1989 + 2004 Children Act), Care Planning & Case Reviews Regulations 2010. Alpha Plus have a written procedure for considering any complaint or representation made by the Services foster carers. Alpha Plus Fostering Provider believes that foster carers have a fundamental right to have their views heard and to be taken notice of in the development of the Services. All complaints/comments provide vital information to inform the future, policy, planning and development of the service as well as identifying the areas of the service which are successful and valued. They help to identify any gaps in service provision and should lead to the development of better services.

As an organisation we welcome feedback of all kinds and will respond as soon as possible to any comments/compliments. A copy of Alpha Plus's complaints procedure is provided to all foster carers and is available on request. In addition to Alpha Plus's Fostering Children's Information which details how a child/young person can complain, each child and young person will have a copy of its own Local Authorities complaints procedure and this will be explained to him or her.

## **Any complaints regarding the Registered Manager should be addressed to:**

Pam Larson  
Regional Director  
Acorn Care and Education  
1 Merchants Place  
River Street  
Bolton  
BL2 1BX

There were four complaints made during the period 1st April 2016 to March 2017 in relation to carers. Three complaints were not substantiated and no further action taken by the LADO. The third complaint was upheld in part. These are updated every three months.

The Agency remains committed to improving practice and learning any lessons from complaints and actively encourage feedback about all aspects of its service.

For a copy of our complaint procedure or to make a complaint please contact the Registered Manager.

The agency records and keeps all records of complaints and compliments, received and these are available on request.

If the foster carers are unhappy with the final decision this can be appealed this can be made direct to the agency or direct to the Independent Review Mechanism (an information leaflet is available on the IRM).

All children placed and foster carers have a statutory right to independent complaints procedure through Ofsted.



## Complaints and Compliments continued

**Anne Longfield OBE is the Children's Commissioner for England. It is her job to advocate for children and young peoples rights. Her contact details are:**

Children's Commissioner for England  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

T: 020 7783 8330

E: [Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Freephone for children and young people  
T: 0800 5288330



# Alpha Plus Statistics

During the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 a total of 136 placements were made with agency carers. 47 of the 136 placements are still with our carers.

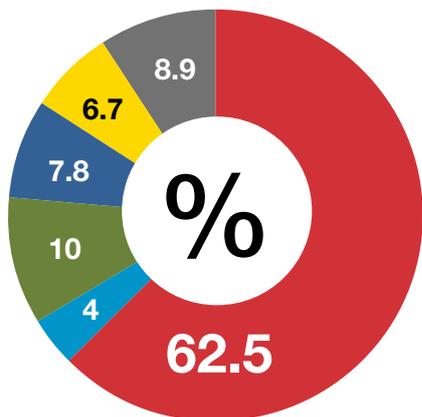
65% of our current placements are long term/permanent matches. This represents a high level of stability in placements.

There were two disruptions of placement during this period.

## Alpha Plus Foster Carers

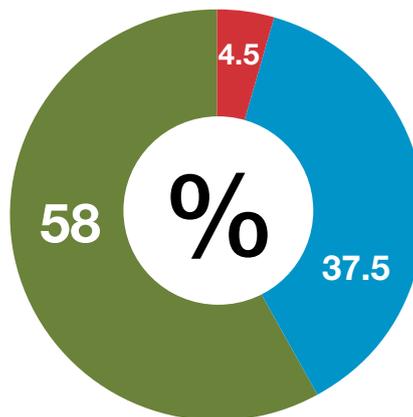
The total number of carers approved by the Agency April 2017 is 73 carers.

### Ethnicity



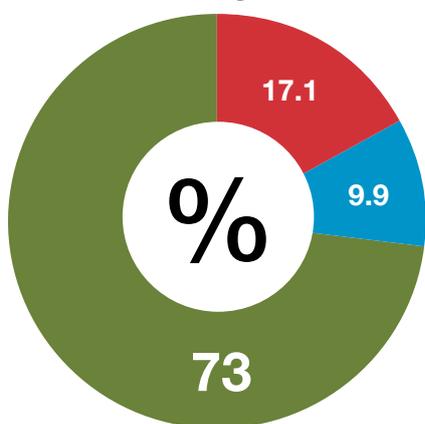
- White British
- African
- Asian
- Dual Heritage
- Black British
- Other

### Age



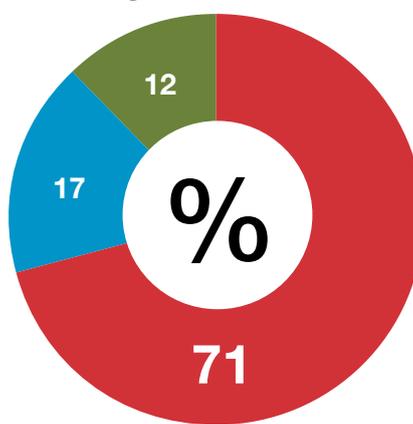
- 0-4 years
- 11-18 years
- 5-10 years

### Religion



- Christian
- Not Known
- Muslim

### Legal Status



- Full Care Order
- Sec 20
- ICO





“More than just a fostering agency”



**alphaplus**<sup>TM</sup>  
fostering

Alpha Plus Fostering Statement of Purpose 2018