

# **Abacus Fostering LTD Statement of Purpose**

## **Abacus Statement of Purpose November 2020**

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# Abacus Fostering LTD Statement of Purpose

## 1. Introduction:

**This document is the statement of purpose for Abacus Fostering Ltd it is based on principals and legislation from the;**

- National Minimum Standards for Foster Services, Standard 16
- Fostering Services Regulations England and Wales Part 1. 3 & 4
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Children Act 1989

## **Abacus fostering.....our ethos**

Abacus' ethos is to provide consistently high standards of care to Children who are Looked After. We endeavour to do this by ensuring that the Foster Carers we recruit have positive motivations to foster and receive quality ongoing Supervision, Support, Training and advice.

We take seriously children wishes and feelings and endeavour to ensure that children are listened to. Children's views are valued and used in developing and delivering our service which puts children at the heart of what we do.

We produce a yearly consultation plan to ensure that consultation is regularly undertaken with everyone who is connected to Abacus Fostering.

**Abacus statement of purpose is aimed to be Jargon free and be easily read by;**

- Foster Carers
- Children & young People
- Parents and Carers
- Social Workers
- Professionals
- General Public

# Abacus Fostering LTD Statement of Purpose

**Our Statement of Purpose can be accessed via the office in either word or electronic form.**

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

Our Aim is to provide excellent quality foster placements to children and young people and children and parents by providing stability and opportunities to achieve in life. We aim to attain this by reaching the following objectives;

- Having policies and procedures in place which are grounded in current research, good practice and legislation.
- Having robust procedures in place for the recruitment of potential carers,
- To provide high quality support and supervision to foster carers
- Provide excellent in house and external training which develops carer skills in caring for children and young people.
- Provide quality and choice of placements ensuring that children are well matched to carers to achieve successful placements
- To meet children's individual needs taking into account all areas under Every Child Matters
- To safeguard children and young people
- To promote and respect children and Young people's heritage and cultural background, responding positively and appropriately to their age, gender, sexuality and identity.
- To listen to children and young people and give them the opportunity to share their wishes and feelings appropriately
- To provide a robust service and a dedicated skilled staff team which is geared up to meeting the needs of foster carers and children and young people
- Work in partnership with others
- Consulting with foster carers, children and young people birth parents and family and professionals to continually improve the service
- Reviewing this statement of purpose when needed and at least annually.

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## 3. Registered provider, Registered Individual/Agency decision maker and Registered manager

### **Director: Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker:**

#### **Barbara Morrison: HCPC**

**Experience:** Barbara has extensive experience in Social work and has been involved in the Care Sector for more than 20 years. This has been gained in both the Public and Private Sector.

Barbara is a qualified Social Worker who is registered with the General Social Care Council / HCPC. Prior to joining Abacus Fostering, Barbara has worked as a Registered Manager for an independent fostering agency and was responsible for the day to day running of the service.

**Role:** Barbara is the Agency Decision Maker, Responsible Individual and a Company Director. As the Responsible Individual, Barbara ensures that the company is compliant with current legislation and guidance. Barbara works 3 days a week with Abacus

### **Director:**

#### **Daniel Ndukwe**

**Experience:** Daniel is a registered and practicing General Practitioner working in a GP practice in Birmingham in an area of high deprivation. He qualified as a GP in 2007. He has experience of working with children under child protection and Looked After Children in his clinical practice. He also works as a Prison GP. He has completed child protection training.

**Role:** Daniel is a Director and joint shareholder of the company. He is also the medical advisor to the fostering panel and is involved the corporate governance responsibilities. Daniel is married to Rosemary Ndukwe.

### **Director & Company Secretary –Adrian Bland**

**Experience:** Adrian has a BSc in Management Sciences from UMIST which he gained in 1992. He is married to Natasha Bland

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Adrian has considerable commercial experience having worked for a number of different businesses in a variety of industries including Financial Services, Estate Agency and Retail Management.

**Role:** is a Company Director, Company Secretary and shareholder.

### **Company Secretary/ Social Worker**

#### **Rosemary Ndukwe, BA Social Work: HCPC**

**Experience:** Rosemary is an experienced Social Worker Rosemary She has experience of working within a family and children assessment unit and has completed Form F foster carer assessments while working for a fostering agency on a self-employed basis. Rosemary has a wealth of knowledge of the fostering industry and of the Supervising Social Worker role. Rosemary also has a diploma in secretarial studies.

**Role:** Rosemary is a Senior Supervising Social Worker and undertakes fostering assessments.

### **Registered Manager-**

#### **Natasha Bland BA in Social Work: HCPC**

**Experience:** Natasha is an experienced Social Worker, with additional qualifications, NNEB and HND in Social Care and Health and a BA in Social Work from University of Birmingham gaining a 2.1 in 2009 and a diploma in Social Care and Health Management Level 5 in 2014.

Natasha has worked for an Independent Fostering Services for 3 years as a self-employed Supervising Social Worker. She was also Panel Chair as well as holding the roles of ADM and RI and is therefore very familiar with independent fostering services and the associated policies, procedures and the general operation and business model.

**Role:** Natasha is the Registered Manager and immediately responsible for all the day to day running of the business.

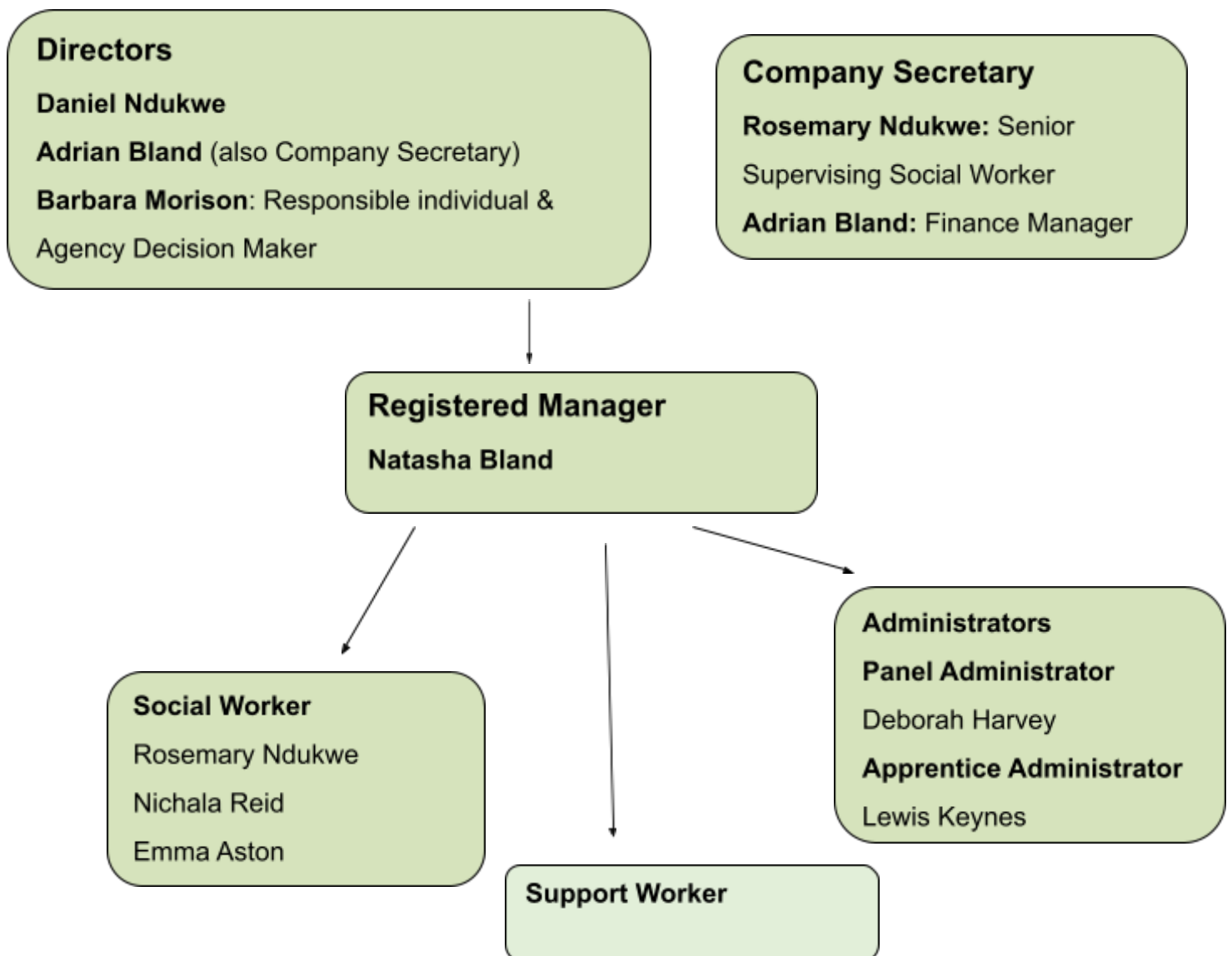
The senior management team meet monthly to oversee the business and ensure that it is;

- Meeting the day to day running and organisation needed for operation
- Compliant with guidance and regulations

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- Meeting this statement of purpose.
- Reviewing and evaluating the service to ensure that areas are identified and auctioned for improvement.
- Reviewing the culture values and principals of Abacus.
- Updating policies and procedures in line with good practice, research and legal requirements.
- Ongoing quality assurance within the service
- Financially sound and operating within legal guidance.

## 4. Organisational structure / Staff roles and responsibilities



### Staff Roles and Responsibilities

# **Abacus Fostering LTD Statement of Purpose**

## **Social Worker Role:**

Social workers are responsible for supervising and supporting Foster Carers and Children & Young People in placement including out of hours support. They also have responsibility in recruiting new potential carers and undertaking assessments. New potential placements of children are matched and risk assessed by a Social Worker

## **Administrator Role:**

The administrator undertakes all admin as needed including, filing, minute taking, typing and answering the phone during normal working hours.

## **5. Staff Training and Development**

Abacus management team are committed to providing a staff team that are encouraged and supported to develop their skills and reflective practice;

Once appointed all staff receive a three-week induction programme and are subject to a 6 month probationary period. Social work staff are also trained in Dyadic developmental psychotherapy which supports the carers in use of PACE parenting a therapeutic approach to caring for children.

All staff have in place monthly supervision and support from the Registered Manager, staff also have an annual appraisal which includes a personal development plan.

Staff have access to ongoing training as needed either as a team or by accessing specialist services for example BAAF Training courses.

Staff are encouraged to share their learning and development with the team through regular group supervision and co- working.

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## 6. Age range, gender and children Abacus Fostering caters for

Abacus Fostering is focused on offering a variety of different placements for children and in some cases their parents under parent and child arrangements. Children and Young People are between the ages of 0 to 18 years old.

Social Workers manage referrals and are responsible for matching and risk assessment. A key task is ensuring that any carers we match with children and young people will have the right skills and attributes to meet the child's / young person's individual needs.

Abacus always ensures that where time and circumstance allow children and young people, parents where included and social workers have the opportunity to meet with carers before deciding if they would like to proceed with the placement.

Abacus works with Local Authorities to achieve outcomes in the five areas specified in Every Child Matters:

- Be Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoy & Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being

At the point of placement, the paperwork completed for the child/ young person, Foster Carers and Social Workers includes;

- Placement Plans
- Delegation of Responsibility
- Health record
- Risk Assessments
- Safer Care Plans

Local Authority Social Workers will be asked to provide the child / Young persons care plan, placement plans and any other information which may be relevant in supporting the foster carer to care for the Child / Young Person



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## 6.1 Children and Young People

**Emergency Placements:** where children have an immediate need to be accommodated and it is not been able to be a planed move for the child/ young person.

**Short term breaks/ Respite :** Where foster carers can provide short term breaks for children with or without disabilities.

**Short term placements:** Are a temporary placement where a child will stay with the foster carer until they either go home, or move into a long term fostering agreement or are adopted.

**Long Term Placements:** Are placements where it has been agreed that Children will remain in care until they reach independence as they are unable to return home.

**Leaving care placements:** Where young people are placed with foster carers for a time limited placement which is task centred to develop independent living skills.

**Sanctuary Seeking children and young people:** placements where Children have been separated from their birth parents and are seeking asylum in the UK. Children will be matched appropriately with carers who have knowledge and understanding in this area.

**Single Placements, Multi placements and Sibling Placements:** Children may be placed with a Foster Carer on their own or with another child/ young person or within a sibling group, dependent on the Foster Carers ability, time and space and agreed criteria. This is always subject to careful matching and risk assessment.

## 6.2. Children with disabilities

All of the above types of placements encompassing;

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**Children with disability placements:** Where children have specific needs in relation to a physical disability, learning disability or sensory impairment. They will be matched appropriately with carers who have specific skills in this area or who are willing to attend specific training in relation to the disability.

## 6.3. Parent and Child Arrangements

**Parent and Child Arrangements:** Where a parent/ parents and their child/ren require a placement to support them in developing parenting skills. Carers are specifically recruited for Parent and Child Arrangements and undergo further training within the assessment process for this type of placement. This type of placement will also have individual placement plan and paperwork to encompass the specific agreements which will be needed between the foster carer, Parent(s) Local Authority Social Worker and Abacus.

## 7. Recruitment and assessment criteria

Anyone over 21 years of age can apply to be a foster carer. At Abacus we value diversity and welcome all people to apply regardless of your gender, age, marital status, ethnicity and culture or sexuality

People who have a conviction of an offence against a child or serious offence against an adult would be excluded. (Please see Fostering Regulations. schedule 4 for an exhaustive list)

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## **7.1 Assessment process**

**The assessment process is completed in 2 stages**

### **Assessment stage 1**

As part of the assessment process stage 1 referencing and checks are undertaken including;

- Proof of identity including a recent photograph
- Enhanced CRB record At least two written references Take a reference from the local authority where the prospective carer lived within the last 10 years.
- Complete a medical report from the Prospective Foster Carers General Practitioner.
- Verification of previous and current employment where this involved children young people or vulnerable adults including a reference
- Family member reference
- Previous partner reference where there have been children
- Adult birth child reference
- Interview undertaken with current children within the household
- School reference for any current children living within the household
- Any other adult, friend or family, partner who lives within the home or who spends significant time there will be interviewed and may be required to undertake an enhanced CRB check.
- Relevant evidence of training or qualifications

In stage 2 we gather more in-depth information about the applicants in terms of their history, identity, personality, lifestyle, skills and experience in caring for children.

Stage 1 and 2 are usually completed in parallel with each other.

## **7.2 Training and preparation groups as part of the assessment process**

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A number of **preparation groups** are held during the year to give people the opportunity to meet Abacus staff and find out about fostering.

**Preparation to Foster Training** is also be part of the assessment process under stage 1. Prospective carers who wish to undertake parent child placements will have to be attended additional Parent and child Placement training before they can attend Panel.

## **7.3 Panel**

Abacus' Fostering Panel is made up of a number of professionals and independent members who have knowledge or skills within the area of fostering, health and education and may have first hand experience or being looked after.

Prospective Carers are required to attend Panel with the Social Worker who completed their Form F. This gives Panel the opportunity to meet the Prospective Carers to support them in making an informed decision on the assessment. The recommendations of Panel are then sent to the Agency Decision Maker who reviews the decisions, evaluation forms and minutes of the meeting and makes a final decision on the prospective carers ability to foster under the approval suggested.

Once the potential Foster Carer have attended Panel we will aim to give them a decision from the Agency Decision Maker regarding their approval within 14 working days (excluding annual leave etc.)

Panel also have a role in the ongoing Annual Review of Foster Carers, complaints and development of the service.

## **7.4 Training of Foster Carers**

Abacus recognises the need for training to be flexible and to fit in with family life and work commitments. Training will be planned to take place during school hours (term Time) during evenings and the occasional weekend throughout the year. This gives variety and the opportunity for everyone to attend.

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Training is held in a central location to everyone usually at the Steward Street office building. Online training is also available for Foster Carers.

Abacus uses a mixture of in-house training and training provided by external organisations. Additional training is accessed for those carers who need specific skills and knowledge and understanding to meet children's individual needs.

During the Foster Carers first year of becoming a Foster Carer they are expected to attend a number of training groups which is part of their core learning and induction.

- Food Hygiene
- Safe Caring
- Attachment
- Health Needs of Looked After Children
- Education Needs of Looked After Children
- Child Protection, including
  - Radicalisation
  - Child Sexual Exploitation
  - County Lines
- Paper Work & Recording Introduction
- Behaviour Management
- First Aid
- Contact with Birth Families
- Parent and Child Placements (for those carers wishing to provide these placements)
- Sanctuary Seeking Children for those Carers wishing to provide these placements
- All carers are expected to attend training on PACE Parenting- a therapeutic parenting approach which supports the care of looked after children.

There after a rolling programme is offered. This reflects the Foster Carers learning needs and needs of children placed. This will be reviewed annually through the Panel process and by use of the Personal Development Plan.

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## **TSD: Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care**

Carers are supported and encouraged to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within their first year of training, however this is dependent on their first placement and when this is matched. We recognise that to be able to complete this training you need to have had some practical experience in fostering.

## **8. Working with Foster Carers**

Abacus views the Foster Carer role with respect and recognises the correlation between good support and successful placements. Abacus prioritises the Foster Carers need for good quality supervision and support. With this at the forefront of our philosophy we have developed the following support package.

### **8.1 Foster Carer Supervision**

Foster Carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker who will visit them once a month to;

- Asses the quality of care children are receiving
- Review safe care practices
- Raise issues of concern
- Support Foster carers to assess and meet the needs of children using PACE
- Establishes training needs
- Gives the opportunity to raise issues of concern
- Establishes any support needs of the carer.

The foster carers will be subject to two- three unannounced visit through the year. More if needed.

### **8.2 Foster Carer Support**

Foster Carers have ongoing support. This is completed by either their social worker or a consistent support worker on a monthly basis. Abacus recognise the flexibility in Foster Carers need for support and will therefore offer additional support visits if

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needed or visits may be combined with another meeting for the child. There is also the opportunity for group support and peer mentoring.

The Supervision Visit does not constitute a Support Visit and will not be viewed as such. We also provide and facilitate a number of support groups throughout the year.

For placements where they are Child and parent regulations additional support visits will be arranged due to the complexity of these placements which will be agreed at the placement meeting.

### **8.3 Foster Carer emergency support and advice**

Abacus has an out of hours and weekend support system where Foster carers have access to advice and guidance from a trained Social Worker who will also visit the carer if needed.

We also provide a 24-hour placement support service available to Local Authorities for the emergency placements of children and young people.

Abacus Fostering pays for all membership of all foster carers to Fostering Talk

### **8.4 Additional Support**

We seek to recruit a diverse range of Foster Carers and have an open recruitment process. The Supervising Social Worker will identify any additional support required within the Assessment and this will be discussed as part of Panel process and reviewed with the recommended approval.

We recognise that at any point the Foster Carers may need additional support depending on the child/ Young person in placement or any personal situation the Foster Carer may encounter, therefore we recognise the need to be flexible with support and that within this package there may be individual needs which we will need to meet via support plans.

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## 9. Complaints Procedure

Abacus Complaints Procedures places emphasis on resolving complaints and concerns at a local level and an early stage where possible. Although they are viewed as a serious matter they are also viewed as a way to improve the service, we take a reflective approach to complaints and use them as a tool to adapt and change our policies and procedures to ensure we are offering the best service possible.

All complaints are viewed as serious and are dealt with in a consistent approach. In the interest of transparency and commitment to individual interests / rights, individuals are able to complain at stage two in the first instance if they wish to.

### Stage 1

Any Complaints will try to be resolved with the Supervision Social Worker and Registered Manager who will meet with the person making the complaint for a discussion.

As part of this discussion it may be decided that it would be more appropriate for the complaint to be directed to the Local Authority with responsibility for the child's Placement under the Local Authority's Complaints Procedure.

A letter of resolution or outcome will be issued in response to the informal complaint by the Registered Manager.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved it will be moved to Stage 2

### Stage 2

This is a more formal level of resolution; the complaint will be passed to an independent advisor who will conduct a full investigation. A report will be completed following the investigation, detailing how the matter was investigated, by whom and



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what outcome was reached with relevant evidence to support the report's conclusions

### **Stage 3**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Two investigation, they must confirm this in writing, including reasons for their dissatisfaction, to a Senior/ Manager/Director who will undertake to arrange for the case to be reviewed by an Independent Panel within 30 days.

If Complainants are still dissatisfied they have the option to contact Ofsted.

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