



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Aims and Objectives

- The main aim of Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd is to care for children who are unable to live with their own family, for as long as is needed and to help re-unite a foster child with their family, wherever appropriate and possible, by providing high quality foster care.
- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to establish and maintain an effective working relationship with the responsible authority, foster carers, a child's family and any other person contributing to a child's care plan, to work in the best interests of the child.
- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to recruit foster carers from all social backgrounds, cultures, ethnic groups and religions in order to offer a wide range of skills and experience to meet the needs of every child referred.
- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to provide a placement that best meets the individual needs of a child taking into account their cultural, racial and religious backgrounds, and in respect of their gender, sexuality and special needs.
- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to promote the highest standards for children and young people in foster care by providing comprehensive and high quality training, support and supervision to foster carers and staff, thereby minimising placement disruptions and giving the child stability of placement and educational opportunities. Within parent and child placements, parents will be supported whilst at the same time ensuring that the needs of any child are fully safeguarded.
- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to exceed the UK National Standards and National Minimum Standards wherever possible, in line with the latest recommendations and developments in child-care practice, to ensure that Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd enhances and maintains its practice standards, to keep the child/young person's interests paramount.

- Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to keep updated with current developments and legislation in fostering and be committed to change when it is required, appropriate and provides for improvements in the service.

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd complies fully with the legal requirements and principles of the:

Children Act 1989, including Guidance and Regulations Volume 4 (2011) and 2013 amendments
National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services,
Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.
The Foster Carer's Charter
Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services 2011, 2013 and 2015 amendments
Working Together 2013 and March 2015 amendments

The organisation also complies with the requirements of the:

UK National Standards for Foster Care, and
Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Assessment, Approval, Training, Management and Support of Foster Carers.

Legal Status

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd is a private limited company.

Statement of Functions

1. Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd can offer foster placements for assessment, support, respite, rehabilitation (if appropriate), as well as emergency, short, medium and long-term care for children where it is not possible for them to live with their birth family.
2. Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd also provide, within the foster care setting, parent and child placements. Carers who provide this service could have been assessed specifically to include their ability to undertake this particular type of work. These placements may be pre-birth assessments, assessment placements or support placements and Xcel together with the parent/child foster carer will support the Local Authority in its assessment of the parent and reaching a decision about the future plans for the child.
3. Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd also provide, within the foster care setting, placements for young people who have been remanded into the care of the Local Authority.
4. Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd recruit assesses and approve suitable people within the context of its Equal Opportunities policy and subject to consideration by Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd fostering panel, to become foster carers.
5. The organisation provide support, advice, supervision and training to the foster carers through a designated Supervising Social Worker, carer support groups and nationally recognised training packages.

6. Through its high rate of contact with all stakeholders, Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd regularly review the work and practice of all carers and such information contributes towards the carer's annual review.
7. Looked-after children/young people who are referred to Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd are considered at the referral stage by the Placements Team in consultation with the Supervising Social Worker for the identified foster carers. The Placements Team and Supervising Social Worker are responsible for ensuring appropriate matches are made between the child and potential carer. This is undertaken in full consultation with placing Social Workers and agreed by a member of the Senior Management Team.
8. Looked-after children/young people receive on-going care from their designated foster carer. The Supervising Social Workers maintain frequent and regular contact with carers and provide supervision, support, advice and consultation as necessary. They also monitor the progress of children and young people as part of their liaison with carers. The Supervising Social Workers are responsible for ongoing liaison with placing Social Workers. The Registered Manager provides regular, planned supervision to the Senior Supervising Social Workers who in turn provide supervision to the Supervising Social Workers in respect of all these matters.

Principles

- Each child is unique and their welfare paramount.
- The child's family is the preferred place for children to live.
- Where a child needs to be looked after outside the family there is no compromise to the provision of high quality individualised care.
- Providing skilled and high quality social work to children/young people and their foster carers, to enable troubled and damaged children to grow, develop and reach their full potential.
- Children have a right to feel safe, be protected, be treated with respect and dignity, be encouraged, nurtured, supported, helped, looked after, have their heritage permitted, be consulted, considered, be helped towards a personal sense of worth, well being and independence.
- Foster carers have the right to expect to be treated as partners in a professional team with an acknowledgement that they carry out difficult and demanding tasks in meeting the needs of a child.
- The parents, carers and relatives of looked-after children have a right to be informed, involved and consulted as appropriate. They have the right to be treated as individuals with respect and without being judged.

- Individual care planning is imperative at the start of each placement. Regular reviews will be held to ensure that the child's needs are being met.
- Children have a right to expect the very best professional care from foster carers. Therefore Xcel 2000 FosterCare Services Ltd is committed to the provision of quality support, advice, supervision, consultation and training to enable carers to meet the child's needs. In addition there is 24-hour support available to carers by telephone from Xcel 2000 FosterCare Services Ltd child care team who also have access to the Senior Manager Team.
- Xcel 2000 FosterCare Services Ltd is committed to working in partnership with all parties who have an involvement in a child's life.
- Xcel 2000 FosterCare Services Ltd is committed to its Equal Opportunities policy and to working in a manner that is anti-discriminatory in practice.
- Xcel 2000 FosterCare Services Ltd actively self regulates its work and maintains an openness to ongoing critical evaluation. It welcomes comment from the children / young people, carers, staff, independent workers, placing authorities, panel members and anyone who has a contribution to make.

Management Structure

The management team of the organisation consists of:

2 Founding Directors
 Director of Operations/ Responsible Individual
 Registered Manager

Staff List

The organisation's staff list at September 2018

Linda Harrison DipSW/Dip H. Ed Applied Social Studies – Director - Qualified in 1996. Worked in Child Protection for Local Authority, Children's Services Social Worker for independent fostering provider. Foster carer for 21 years. Co-founded Xcel 2000 in March 2000.

Patricia Gausten DipSW/Dip H. Ed Applied Social Studies – Director - Worked as an accountant and ran a children's nursery. Qualified in 1996. Worked in Child Protection for a Local Authority and manager of an independent fostering provider. Foster carer for 22 years. Co-founded Xcel in March 2000.

Tracey Sullivan MCMI Strategic Leadership and Management Diploma – Director of Operations/Responsible Individual - Tracey previously worked as a Children's Services Co-ordinator in another IFP having a wide experience of working with children & young people in education. She joined Xcel in March 2000 and worked as Placement Team Co-ordinator and Development Officer. She was promoted to her current role in 2011 and her role includes responsibility for tenders and contracts and the supervision of the Children's Services Team and Foster Carer Recruitment Team and the Finance & HR officer. She is also the Responsible Individual.

Lin Redman - Dip Soc Psy and Social Policy, Dip SW, Master of Arts Degree in Social Work; Practice Teaching, Child Care Award Parts 2 – 6; Post graduate CMS in Management – Registered Manager - Lin is a qualified and registered Social Worker with over 21 years post-qualifying experience. She is an experienced and skilled practitioner and manager, with a background in supporting children and families prior to working with the youth offending service, experienced in Court work and supporting the most vulnerable and complex young people. Passionate about improving the lives of children in foster care, Lin has 16 years' experience in working for a not for profit Fostering provider as a Senior Practitioner and Registered Manager, helping achieve outstanding services for children and carers. Joined Xcel in April 2016.

Emma Hopkins DipSW – Quality Assurance and Outcomes Manager – Qualified in 2003. Emma worked as a children's residential worker before she undertook her social work training. She has worked as a Children and Families Social Worker in Dorset and in Medway and has been a registered foster carer with Kent County Council since May 2010. Emma was promoted to Fostering Manager in June 2014. From April 2016 Emma moved into her role of Quality Assurance Manager and is the agency Decision Maker. Joined Xcel in October 2011.

Philippe Pointon DipSW – Senior Supervising Social Worker - Kent. Qualified as a Social Worker in 2000. Previous experience as a Senior Practitioner, Social Worker for adolescents, family placement co-ordinator and duty Social Worker. Joined Xcel in June 2006.

Dean Blanche BA Hons Social Work – Senior Supervising Social Worker – Essex. Qualified in 2006. Post qualifying experience in child protection, leaving care and permanency teams. Dean has also worked as an older person's Social Worker and a young person's advocate. Dean was promoted to Senior Supervising Social Worker in April 2016. Joined Xcel 2000 in May 2010.

Kelly Sarjeant (BA) SW – Supervising Social Worker. Qualified as a Social Worker in 2012. University placement experience with Xcel 2000 before qualifying. Post qualifying experience with an Independent Fostering Agency until 2014. Joined Xcel in January 2014.

Heather de Gray - (BA) SW – Supervising Social Worker. Qualified as a Social Worker in 2013. Completed her ASYE in 2014. Has worked in Child Protection, Looked After Children as a Family Worker since March 2009, through to qualifying in 2013 at Medway Council. Placements during my SW course include Parenting Assessment Team and Youth Offending Team. Since qualifying worked in Looked after Children and Proceedings Team and Fostering Team all at Medway Council. Joined in February 2016. (Maternity leave August 2017)

Nicola Simonini - Supervising Social Worker. Obtained a degree in 2006 in Criminology with Sociology, which led to work at Medway Secure Training Centre as a Custody Officer in 2007, working with young people who were on remand and in custody. Worked there for 2 years before starting Social Work degree in 2010. Graduated in 2013 after having worked in a Secondary School placement and a Youth Offending Team placement for 6 months each. Worked in Medway's Child in Need and Child Protection Team for nearly 2 years before spending 6 months in the Duty and Assessment Team in the London Borough of Barnet, then worked in Swale's Children's Social Work Team for a year. Joined Xcel in August 2017.

Geoff Hudson, MA in Social Work – Supervising Social Worker (London). Qualified as a Social Worker in 2015, having had a final placement in Rotherham across both a Child Protection Team

and their 'Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic Team' for six months. Since qualifying has worked in Child Protection, Special Guardianship and Family & Friends Foster Care (both assessment and support), and Post-Adoption Support teams. Joined Xcel in March 2018.

Deborah Chidgey – *Carer Recruitment and Panel Administrator*. 6½ years' experience as an office administrator with another fostering provider. 5 years' experience as an Administration Supervisor, before promotion to Management PA in June 2005. Panel Administrator and Recruitment Administrator since September 2002. 3 years previous experience as a manager. Joined Xcel in April 2000.

Karen Butcher – *Finance and HR Officer*. Worked in accountancy since 1981, including 12 years as a Financial Accounts Manager. Joined Xcel in September 2000.

Chris Richardson-Smith – *Head of Admin*. Chris previously worked as a Teaching Assistant for 8 years then spent 4 years as a school Receptionist/Secretary. Started at Xcel as an Admin Assistant, promoted to Office Supervisor in August 2012 and then Head of Admin in August 2015. Joined Xcel in October 2006.

Janice Nunn – *Monitoring Officer*. Worked for 6 years for an organisation providing care & support for adults with learning difficulties & challenging behaviour, holding the post of House Administrator, Regional Secretary, Support Worker and Senior Support Worker. Has completed NVQ Level 4 in Health & Social Care. Joined Xcel in April 2007.

Claire Beckingham – *Office Administrator* - Claire has worked for 2 other independent fostering providers as a receptionist and secretary. She has also worked as admin support to an independent Social Worker. Joined Xcel in April 2010.

Carol Cannon – *Senior Children's Services Placements & Respite Officer*. Carol previously worked at a Secure Children's Training Centre working with 12-17 year olds placed at the centre either on remand or sentenced for a variety of offences. Joined Xcel in August 2013.

Gwyneth Keable – *Office Administrator*. Administrator for our London/Essex/Herts foster carers. Gwyneth previously worked as Administration Assistant for a publishing company. Joined Xcel in August 2015.

Carole George – *Finance Assistant*. Carole has worked in the financial industry since 1982. Joined Xcel in November 2015.

Sarah Aindow – *Children's Services & Placements Officer*. Sarah worked with adults with learning disabilities, mental health issues and challenging behaviour for 9 years in a range of roles including Support Worker, Team leader and Deputy Manager. In this time she also completed levels two and three QCF in Health and Social Care. Joined Xcel in December 2015. (Maternity leave June 2018)

Leanne Carty - *Annual Review Co-Ordinator*. Leanne previously joined Xcel in 2003 after leaving school and was part of the admin team for 12 years. She left in 2015 to raise her family and has returned to Co-ordinate Annual Home Reviews. Re-joined Xcel in June 2018.

Ashleigh Stickells - *Children's Services & Placements Officer*. Ashleigh previously worked with children from early years to 18 with a range of disabilities who have mild to severe needs, medical

complexities and challenging behaviours. She has also worked with adults with learning difficulties in the past completing The Care Certificate, Extended Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care and has recently finished her studies on the BA (Hons) Special Educational Needs and Inclusion course at Canterbury Christchurch University. Joined Xcel in June 2018.

Aimee Bartlett (DipHe) – *Fostering Recruitment Officer*. Qualified as a Staff Nurse in 2006. Worked for a local charity since 2013, co-ordinating and marketing various health and wellbeing projects, groups and activities. Joined Xcel September 2018.

Complaints

The overall objective of Xcel's Complaint Procedure is to provide children and other persons who have a sufficient interest in a child's welfare, who feel they have a genuine complaint to make about any aspect of Xcel 2000's provisions, with an opportunity to have it examined quickly, fairly and effectively without reprisal, and where the complaint is deemed to be justified, to have it resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Recruitment and Approval of Foster Carers

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd aim to attract foster carers in Kent, London and the East of England, offering a wide range of skills and experience to meet the needs of individual children.

We aim to recruit people from a wide range of cultures, religions, and ethnic backgrounds, to reflect and celebrate the rich diversity of the children referred to Xcel 2000.

We believe in providing potential foster carers with sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision about whether to pursue a career in fostering. Equally, we aim to eliminate any applicant who is clearly unsuitable or ill intentioned by applying a rigorous and thorough assessment process, in line with safer recruitment policies and protocols.

Potential carers are recruited mainly through advertising campaigns and by 'word of mouth'. Enquiries are processed and an information pack is sent to those who meet Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd initial criteria. This is followed by a home visit by two members of Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd.

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd does not openly recruit foster carers who are currently working for another agency or Local Authority. However if applications are made from these carers Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd will comply with the Fostering Network transfer protocol (2014).

Enquirers who wish to be considered as foster carers must complete an application form, which asks for details of the applicants, their household, their life experiences and a section to enable relevant checks to be made. When this is satisfactorily completed, the assessment can begin and will follow the Stage 1 and Stage 2 process as defined in the Assessment and Approval of Foster Carer Guidelines and Regulations (2013).

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd will appoint an Assessing Social Worker to undertake the assessment. They will meet the applicants and explain the process including the timescale, preparation training and the need for checks to be made and referees to be interviewed. The

Social Worker will, in particular explain that the assessment is based on whether the applicants can meet or have the potential to meet a range of competencies, relevant to looking after someone else's children. It will also be explained that evidence will be required to back up these competencies.

During the assessment process, the applicants will be very much involved, collecting evidence and discussing with the Social Worker all aspects of caring for children. This will lead to a final report being completed by the Social Worker.

The documentation used for the main report and factual information is the BAAF Form F. The main report will contain the information required about the applicants as detailed in the National Minimum Standards, including their approaches to discipline and their attitudes towards health and education.

When the reports have been completed, satisfactory checks have been made and the referees interviewed, the Social Worker will make their recommendations, including the number of children and age range. The applicants will be able to see the report and challenge any part of it they do not agree with. Finally the applicants and Social Worker will sign the report in readiness for presentation to the fostering panel.

For full details of this process, please refer to Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd *Foster Carer Recruitment, Selection and Assessment Process* available on request.

When the assessment is complete, it will need to be approved by Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd. The decision on whether to approve the applicants will be based on the recommendations of the fostering panel. The fostering panel meets at regular intervals during the year and its members are made up of those individuals required by the *Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011*.

The Assessing Social Worker and the applicants will be required to attend the meeting of the panel when the assessment report is due to be presented. The panel's recommendation, which will be based on the contents of the report, will be advised to the applicants at the meeting. Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd Decision Maker will then confirm their decision in writing, detailing the terms of approval and enclosing a *Foster Care Agreement* for the applicants' signature, and a copy of the *Foster Carer Post Panel Handbook*.

The foster carers' approval will be reviewed on an annual basis and at other times if deemed necessary. The process comprises of reports being obtained from the foster carers, Supervising Social Worker and the Social Workers who have had children or young people placed during the preceding 12 months. The review meeting can be chaired by a Reviewing Officer. This procedure meets the requirements of the *National Minimum Standards* and the *Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011*.

The first annual review of a foster carer will be presented to the fostering panel by their Supervising Social Worker. Foster carers are asked to attend. The panel will make their recommendation to continue, change or defer their approval or terminate their approval. Xcel 2000's Decision Maker will either ratify or overturn the panel's recommendation based on the panel minutes and information presented to panel.

All subsequent reviews are completed by a Reviewing Officer at Xcel who then forwards these directly to the Decision Maker who will make the decision on the foster carers' continuing approval. If there are concerns or issues about the family, the review can be referred to the fostering panel for their recommendation before a final decision is taken.

The Decision Maker will confirm the decision to the foster carers verbally within 48 hours of the approval decision being made. A subsequent letter will detail any change in the carers' approval terms, the reasons for the changes and that it will take effect 28 days from the date of the letter. If a Qualifying Determination, the letter will also invite the applicants to submit written representations within 28 days of the date of the letter if they disagree with the decision or have the decision referred to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

Foster Carer Support and Training

Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd places great emphasise on the supervision and support of foster carers. Each foster carer is assigned a Supervising Social Worker when they have been approved by the organisation.

The Supervising Social Worker is responsible for the social work relating to a child, primarily their safety and welfare. They are also there to ensure that the carer has the necessary support and information to be able to carry out their task.

The support offered to all carers includes:

- 24 hour Social Worker support
- Supervision visits within own home.
- Up to 21 days respite
- Monthly support and supervision groups
- Free membership of Fostering Network
- All Risks and Public Liability insurance cover

Foster carer training is a mandatory part of being a foster carer and commences during the assessment process and continues until they retire.

Pre-approval training is based on the Fostering Network course *Skills to Foster* and includes modules on Health & Safety, Safe Caring, Sexual Abuse and Equal Opportunities. One day training courses are provided on a monthly basis to carers, together with longer courses offered from time to time, in line with individual personal development plans. .

On-line training is offered to carers and other significant people to enhance their training opportunities and portfolio.

For more information on the support and training of foster carers, please refer to Xcel 2000 Fostercare Services Ltd's policy document *Foster Carer Supervision and Support*, available on request.

Statement of Purpose approved

Lin Redman (Manager)



Tracey Sullivan (Responsible Individual)



Date 16 August 2017