

Staff Recruitment and Support

Description

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<https://sparksfostering.org/wp-content/uploads/speaker/post-6283.mp3?cb=1741349644.mp3>

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Organisational structure

The members of the senior management team are listed on the Sparks Fostering website.

The roles within Sparks Fostering are:

- The Responsible Individual provides oversight of the work of the Registered Manager, with a particular focus on maintaining oversight of the viability of the service.
- The Registered Manager is an experienced social worker, who is registered with Ofsted and is the lead member of staff for the running, development and monitoring of Sparks Fostering. The Registered Manager is the line manager for other social workers.
- Supervising social workers offer direct supervision to foster carers. Supervising social workers ensure that foster carer recordings are of a high standard and that children's plans are being adhered to.
- Support workers provide support with writing daily records (when this is required) and by supporting and advising foster carers to care for children looked after. Support workers are available for out of hours support; however, social workers and managers can be contacted when needed. When foster carers are not allocated a support worker, the work is covered by the supervising social worker.
- Panel members review fostering assessments, foster carer reviews and other Sparks Fostering reports. Panel members provide an additional and essential layer of oversight for the work of Sparks Fostering.



Sparks Fostering may also enlist the work of student social workers, or independent contractors. The work of students, support workers and independent contractors is overseen and/or supervised by a Sparks Fostering qualified social worker.

All staff (qualified and unqualified) are supervised and have access to training.

Foster carers taking on other roles

Sparks Fostering wishes to make full use of the talents, skills and experiences of our foster parents and members of the fostering household, for instance in delivering training or mentoring or otherwise supporting other foster parents. In considering the suitability of one of our approved foster parents or a member of their household to also work for Sparks Fostering, care is taken to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest or negative impact on children looked after. For instance, the person may have access to records or may be in a position to influence a placement or approval decision. A conflict may also arise when employing a foster parent elsewhere within the wider organisation if they might have inappropriate influence over matters relating to their fostering task. Conflict must be avoided, and staff and foster carers are expected to disclose if conflict occurs unexpectedly so that adjustments can be made to the role.

Applications

To review job descriptions and person specifications, and then apply for work with Sparks Fostering, [click here](#).

Equal opportunities

Sparks Fostering values the different experiences, knowledge and skills that the staff and foster carers bring to the organisation – it is only by having a diverse staff team and foster care group that the diverse needs of the children in our care can be met.

The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection to prevent discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics, which are: Age; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; gender reassignment; sex; sexual orientation. Where these factors are recorded during the application and assessment process, it is for the sole purpose of monitoring.

Sparks Fostering also makes reasonable adjustments to support staff and foster carers to be able to carry out their roles. For example, the text on the website can be reviewed via audio or PDF download. Sparks Fostering supports staff to access and use any other equipment required to carry out work.

If staff, foster carers or children feel that they have been discriminated against, or they are made aware of discrimination within the organisation, the Sparks Fostering 'Complaints/Whistleblowing' policy should be referred to.

Onboarding and Further Support

Induction and training

to view the Sparks Fostering 'training policy', which outlines how staff and foster carers are provided the information needed to support the children in our care.

Socialising and events

Building positive and productive relationships with team members is a core aspect of the work. Staff members are encouraged to organise social and casual meetings with foster carers, children and other staff. The meetings should be predominately positive experiences, should involve consistent and regular direct contact with others and should (over time) demonstrate increased trust.

Supervision

Staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. All staff have an allocated line manager and foster carers have an allocated supervising social worker.

A written record is kept by Sparks Fostering detailing the time, date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision.

Any person working for Sparks Fostering, but is not employed by Sparks Fostering, is appropriately supervised while carrying out their duties (where this is possible).

Probations and appraisals

All staff, regardless of contract type or hours worked, are subject to a probation review at 9 months.

All staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and, where they are working with children, this appraisal takes into account any views of children that Sparks Fostering is providing a service for.

Probation and appraisals are carried out by a line manager. If there are any actions identified at probation or appraisal, the progress on the actions is reviewed regularly at supervisions.

Audits

Line managers carry out regular audits of Sparks Fostering records to ensure that work is recorded accurately and that progress on children's, staff, and organisational plans is clearly identifiable. Poor record keeping is likely to lead to disciplinary action.

Contribution to service development

Sparks Fostering is keen to listen to feedback from staff, foster carers and residents. Any suggestions

for improvements are taken seriously and improvements are made whenever reasonably practicable.

Lone working

Staff and foster carers are expected to record all upcoming work meetings in their electronic diaries so that staff can be located when necessary (and work can be covered in their absence).

Staff who are attending locations and addresses which are unknown are expected to notify a colleague beforehand and make contact immediately after the meeting, to ensure safety.

If there is any reason to believe that a location or meeting may present a risk, this should be discussed with a line manager beforehand. If necessary, a second worker should also attend the meeting, or the meeting may be rearranged or cancelled.

Under no circumstances should the safety of any individual be risked.



Duty rota

Foster carers are provided contact details for the duty support line, which is covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The duty worker provides advice on the phone and will decide if face to face contact is required.

Staff and carer retention

Staff and foster carers are retained by providing good support and high quality and timely issues resolution. It is very important to Sparks Fostering that staff (including panel members) and foster carers feel supported in their role and that they are able to provide the best possible care to children. If there are any concerns or issues, it should be discussed with line management, who will aim to resolve issues whenever possible, as quickly as possible.

To view the Sparks Fostering complaints/allegations/whistleblowing policy, [click here](#).

The Sparks Fostering Registered Manager is also available for discussions.

Additional Resources

[Social work supervision](#) – a presentation by Social Work England

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user