



Happy Hearts Foster Care

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Introduction

Happy Hearts Foster Care is a small, independent family fostering service with a therapeutic ethos committed to personalised high quality, practical, emotional and therapeutic support to children in care. Happy Hearts Foster Care an independent fostering agency was established in 2021 to meet the needs of children and young people, who require high quality foster placements, between the ages of 0 – 18 years of either gender.

Rizwan and Nayla Khan, the directors have both worked as professional foster carers for a number of years, recognising the continued support required to children and young people and also foster carers to enable an underpinned ethos of stability and support. They have a shared vision to empower foster carers to improve outcomes for children and young people. This led Rizwan and Nayla to set up a bespoke fostering service based in the West Midlands.

Happy Hearts recognises the complexities involved in fostering and fully acknowledges the invaluable role foster carers play in caring for children and young people. They will ensure at all times foster carers are supported 24 hours and are listened to; valuing their input to deliver a high-quality service.

This document sets out the Statement of Purpose of Happy Hearts Foster Care whose head office is based in Birmingham. Happy Hearts offer foster placements for children and young people in partnership with their placing local authorities.

In line with the expectations of the National Minimum Standards 16.1 this Statement of Purpose is made available to the following people:

- Current foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Staff members of Happy Hearts Foster Care
- Children and young people who are placed with carers at HHFC
- A parent or person with parental responsibility of any child placed with HHFC
- Local authorities who are considering placement with HHFC
- General public and other stakeholders

The Statement of Purpose for Happy Hearts Foster Care has been developed to meet the requirements arising from:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004
- The Fostering Service Regulation (2011)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2, 3 & 4
- The Care leavers Regulations 2010
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

The Statement of Purpose is intended to be reader friendly and child- focused as outlined in National Minimum Standard 16.2.

As required the Statement of Purpose sets out the Aims and Objectives of Happy Hearts Foster Care, the services and facilities it provides and how the service monitors the outcomes for children placed in our care. It sets out to define the principle underpinning the service we provide but does not include the details of policies/processes and procedures, which are available upon request.

A copy of the Statement of Purpose can be provided upon request and can be found on the Happy Hearts Foster Care website: www.happyheartsfostercare.co.uk

The senior management team will review this Statement of Purpose annually or as and when required/necessary.

Company Details:

Happy Hearts Foster Care is a private company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Number 13273130 It is registered as an Independent Fostering Provider under Provision of the Care Standards Act 2000 and is planned to be regulated by Ofsted, Ofsted Registered Number: **SC2649488**

Mission Statement

Happy Hearts Foster Care believes that every child/young person has the right to have the same opportunities as other children/young people in an environment that is nurturing, supportive and safe thus enabling every child to reach their full potential, through empowering them to take control of their lives in a positive manner. Our work is underpinned with a holistic and therapeutic ethos, with an overarching aim of ensuring each child and young person is fully supported to build resilience and confidence to reach their own unique potential.

Happy Hearts recognises the complexities involved in fostering and fully acknowledges the invaluable role foster carers play in caring for children and young people. We will ensure at all times foster carers are supported 24 hours and are listened to; valuing their input to deliver a high-quality service.

Commitment to the professional development of both staff and foster carers by providing statutory, mandatory and specialist training which equips foster carers and their families in their role. We believe this is the basis for achieving positive outcomes for young people, building their confidence and capacity to meet the challenges of adult life.

Aims and Objectives

At Happy Hearts Foster Care, we adopt a collaborative approach to care planning. This allows us to reach our aim of providing a nurturing, supportive and safe environment where each child is given the opportunity to flourish and achieve positive outcomes.

Our aim is to provide stability and safety for looked after children placed with our foster families with a secure base within which they are equipped and enabled to provide safe, nurturing and loving homes to children and young people unable to live with their birth families.

To continually develop links with therapeutic practitioners to provide the highest quality foster care service responsive to the identified recovery needs of the child. Further ensuring that foster carers have an easily accessible support structure that is bespoke and professional and provides additional resources as necessary to support the foster placement.

Our Aims and Objectives:

- To promote and develop the young person's emotional, social, educational and physical needs
- To give consideration to the views and wishes of the child or young person ensuring they are heard in decisions about their life
- To work with local authorities, education departments and other professionals in order to make meaningful partnerships in the best interests of children
- To identify, recruit & retain individuals/families with the necessary skillset and desire to deliver therapeutic fostering and a commitment to working in partnership with Happy Hearts in developing their fostering knowledge and skills
- To provide our foster carers with the best support, training and supervision necessary for their continuing development and to achieve the desired outcomes for children and young people in their care. To view them as professionals and listen to at all times
- To maintain a core team of qualified, experienced and committed staff who can holistically support foster carers supporting children and young people in developing important life skills through education and socially constructive opportunities
- To work in partnership with local authorities to achieve the best outcomes for each child in relation to health and wellbeing, education and skills to well equip them in later years. Promoting safer caring through robust policies and procedures, quality training and partnership working with other professionals

It is the responsibility of foster carers, staff and managers to declare any information in relation to possible conflicts of interest in providing a service to the agency, and the care of children placed with Happy Hearts Foster Care

Quality Assurance and Outcomes

To monitor the quality of the services outlined above Happy Hearts Foster Care; uses the following elements:

- **Carers Recordings:** All foster carer records are signed off and monitored through regular supervision provided by Happy Hearts' Supervising Social Workers. Sample cases are monitored by the Registered Manager with action taken to address any shortfalls. All children's records are continually monitored by the Responsible Individual and the Registered Manager, where action is taken to address any discrepancies
- **The Independent Fostering Panel:** It is the role of the fostering panel to make recommendations about the approval status of foster carers. Happy Hearts Foster Care is committed to ensure that the fostering panel takes an independent role of scrutiny that provides independent feedback on the quality of all reports it considers
- **Statutory Checks:** Management works alongside the administrator(s) to make sure that all statutory checks are completed and valid for foster carers, staff members, consultants and others involved with Happy Hearts Foster Care
- **The Voice of the Child:** The voice of the child is always carefully listened to as evidenced in the Looked after Child Review, the Foster Carer Review and at regular consultation meetings
- **Regular Reviews of Service Provision:** This is achieved by undertaking regular reviews of foster carers, policy and procedures and compliance with regulation. This information is used to identify targets for continuous improvement
- **Training of Staff and Foster Carers:** This is achieved by providing high quality training by using a range of internal and external providers using a variety of learning methods. A comprehensive training schedule is planned in advanced for the forthcoming year where all members are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills set. This will be closely monitored by the agency

In addition to the methods outlined above, outcomes for the service as a whole is measured in the following areas:

- Compliance
- Quality Assurance

- Educational attainment and attendance
- Health incidents and reports
- Placement stability
- Number of complaints and allegations
- Number of incidents of children going missing from care
- Number of accidents or other noteworthy incidents involving fostered children
- Number of children with an up- to- date care plan and review outcome report

In addition, Quaterly Regulation 35 Reports are completed to monitor Schedule 6 and Schedule 7.

Management Structure and Staffing

The extensive experience of the Directors in working in the social care sector as professional foster carers, provides Happy Hearts Foster Care a unique position where the Directors themselves have first-hand experience in providing very high-level care to looked after children and young people. Coupled with highly trained and skilful staff including the Registered Manager and Supervising Social Workers, puts them in a strong position in understanding fostering from both the perspective of foster carers and social workers.

This deep understanding and experience of the directors in providing high levels of care and a nurturing environment in the home for children and young people helps them in being the driving force behind the agency and contributes towards the agency meeting it's aims and objectives.

There is also an independent panel team responsible for the assessment and approval of foster carers within the agency. There are various other individuals also involved who work as consultants performing a variety of roles including panel members, Form F assessors, support workers etc.

All those working for or working on behalf of Happy Hearts Foster Care either on a permanent basis or as consultants are rigorously vetted; which includes an enhanced DBS check in line with the National Minimum Standards 2011.

With the continual growth of the company the following structure is also likely to change.

Happy Hearts Team – December 2022

Directors: Mr Rizwan Khan & Mrs Nayla Khan

Responsible Individual: Mrs Nayla Khan

Registered Manager: Jayne Figgett

Categories of Placements

Happy Hearts Foster Care offers a range of placements, including planned care, emergency and respite care, shared care, long, medium and short-term care, solo placements, sibling groups, short-breaks, step down care and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.

We recognise that placing authorities are looking for different placements types which meet the individual needs of children and young people in care. At Happy Hearts all placements are matched to meet the individual needs of children and young people by placing them with foster carers who have the necessary skill set and experience to meet those needs. The carers then receive on-going support and training/bespoke training wherever they feel the need.

All placements must be negotiated through the child or young person's local authority either through an individual placement contract or as part of a wider contract of service provisions commissioned by the local authority.

Below is a list of categories of placements offered by Happy Hearts Foster Care.

Long Term Placements

Long term placement. This is where foster carers have an interest in providing a placement for children and/or young people or a sibling group on a long term or permanent fostering basis. This is usually up until they are 18 years of age.

Short and Medium-Term Placements

Short and medium-term placement. This is where a child is expected to move on to an appropriate next step.

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| Short-term placement | will be between 2 days to 6 months |
| Medium – term placement | will be 6 months to 12 months |
| Long-term placement | where the child/young person is expected to remain until independence |

Emergency Placements

Happy Hearts Foster Care provides a twenty-four-hour service. Our foster carers are able to accept an emergency placement, which may be due to the need of providing a place of safety for the children or young people.

Respite and Short-Break Placements

We aim to work with a number of carers who provide placements on a respite basis. This could be to support a birth family in need of help or to support a foster family in need of a break.

Respite placements are where the family is supported by a regular break(s), a one-off break or a break due to a crisis within the family. This is usually between 2 days up to 6 weeks.

Remand Placements

Remand placements are when young people have ended up in the criminal justice system and awaiting a court date for offences they have been alleged to have committed. This would be an alternative to the young person being placed either in custody or a secure accommodation.

Happy Hearts Foster Care has a rigorous matching process where we match the skills, knowledge and abilities of the foster carers to the presenting needs of the child. The proposed carer will have undergone training pertaining to managing challenging behaviours and working with other professionals involved with this type of placement.

Parent and Child Placements

This type of placement entails placements of parents and their child or children into care. This allows carers at Happy Hearts to give support and guidance to parents in caring for their own child. Often the placements are used to assess the parenting skills and ability of the parents to keep their child/children safe and properly cared for. The level of supervision will be discussed with the Local Authority.

Sibling Placements

Sibling placements are when siblings are placed together in a foster care household. Happy Hearts Foster Care advocates keeping siblings together within a family environment. We recognise the enormous benefits this can bring as siblings are often a source of comfort, reassurance and continuity to one another in what are often very difficult circumstances. Happy Hearts will always try to place siblings together unless deemed otherwise by the placing authority.

Disability Placements

A disability placement would mean providing care for a child or young person with a range of medical conditions. These disabilities can be of a physical nature limiting a child's mobility, sensory or learning ability or be of a learning and/or developmental nature.

Happy Hearts Foster Care will have experienced foster carers with the skills and experience in caring for children and young people who have a disability and/or require specialist medical care.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Placements

This is where a child or young person has been forced to flee from of their own country of origin without the protection of their family.

Happy Hearts will have experienced foster carers with skills in caring for children and young people who are seeking asylum.

Step Down Placements

This is where the child/young person is moved from a residential home back into family life. Happy Hearts will provide high levels of therapeutic fostering in a carefully planned way to help support the transition

Placing Children and Young People

All placements of children and young people are made and monitored in accordance with The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Fostering Services Volume 4 and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review. All foster carers are appropriately approved, reviewed and have a signed foster carer agreement. Wherever possible, a pre-placement planning meeting is undertaken, including introductions between the Foster Carer and the child/young person. Risk Assessments are stated at the point of placement and reviewed along with the care plan. Local authority care plan and other essential information is requested prior to placement and followed up when necessary, post placement.

Matching

All placements are carefully matched where possible to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be best met by foster carers with relevant skills and experience. Matching documentation is completed by the placement team to evidence matching.

Once a referral is received, liaison takes place between Happy Hearts Foster Care, local authority professionals and our foster carers.

When emergency placements are accepted out of hours the matching will then be done by the Manager, with the information available at the time.

Children and young people will never be expected to share a bedroom with another fostered child or birth children of the foster carers, other than if they are siblings and it is safe appropriate to do so.

Services offered

- a) Happy Hearts Foster Care caters for children between the ages of 0 – 18 years and of either gender
- b) Education (support with homework and other set educational tasks. Where necessary, liaison with schools/colleges/education centres)
- c) Outreach workers to support children/young people in placement such as (court applications for asylum/refugee status etc
- d) Working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children/young people
- e) Drug/alcohol/substance awareness training for children/young people & foster carers
- f) Providing recreational/leisure activities
- g) Reports, (assessment, progress, incident management and management investigations etc)
- h) Maintaining boundaries of the placement/respecting the local community
- i) Working with offending behaviour
- j) Family contact work
- k) Health and well-being ensuring all children are registered with a GP, Dentist, Optician
- l) Equal opportunities/diversity/gender awareness training for children/young people, prospective and approved foster carers
- m) Semi-independence training for young people leaving foster care

The Process of Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

Happy Hearts Foster Care makes use of the competencies approach in all stages of the recruitment, assessment and approval of the foster carers. We endorse the view expressed in the Fostering Network Code of Practice that the use of common, standard assessment tools, such as those produced by the Fostering Network and the Coram BAAF Form F, will enable fostering services to achieve uniform standards. We therefore make full use of the above tools in the recruitment, assessment and approval stages of fostering applications.

We also seek to actively promote the Fostering Network values underpinning the competencies approach and to ensure that they are an integral part of the assessment process.

These are that:

- Child safety is paramount
- Individuals are respected
- Difference and diversity is valued
- Equality is promoted
- Discrimination is challenged and confidentiality is maintained
- Advice and feedback is provided in a constructive way

- Applicants are supported to demonstrate their competence
- Standards of childcare are explicit and agreed

Each foster carer is subjected to and will be required to participate in a comprehensive assessment of their ability to carry out the fostering task and must be formally approved by the agency before a child or young person is placed in their care.

Happy Hearts Foster Care complies with the requirements laid out by The Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and amendments in legislative framework. Happy Hearts follows a two-staged process for assessment of foster carers.

Stage 1 of the Assessment

1. Initial Enquiry – All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to rigorous assessment and vetting procedures. When there is an enquiry from a potential foster carer, Happy Hearts Foster Care makes contact by telephone and information gathering commences. If the enquirer meets the initial criteria, an information pack is sent out to them.
2. Initial Visit – An initial visit takes place in the home of the prospective foster carer(s). We aim to book this within five working days from initial contact. If the initial visit is successful and both parties wish to proceed, the relevant documentation and subsequent process is then discussed.
3. Application Paperwork – The prospective foster carer(s) must complete an application form, giving detailed information about themselves and their family and give consent to undertake further checks and enquires to determine suitability. This is in accordance with Regulation 26 (1A) the agency will obtain the information specified in Part 1 of Schedule 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 which includes:
 - The applicant's full name, address and date of birth;
 - Details of the applicant's health, supported by a medical report;
 - Particulars of children in the applicant's family (whether or not they are members of the household) and any other children in the household;
 - Particulars of the household's accommodation; health and safety check;
 - Outcomes of any request or application made by the applicant, or any member of the applicants' household, to foster or adopt children or for registration as an early or later years' provider under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006, including particulars of any previous approval or refusal of approval;
 - The name and address of any fostering service that the applicant has been an approved foster carer for in the preceding 12 months;

- Names and addresses of two persons who will provide personal references for the applicant;
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Certificates obtained for each member of the household aged 18 or over;
- Details of any current and any previous marriage, civil partnership or similar relationship;
- Consulting the local authority in whose area the applicant lives, if this is different to the fostering service;

If an applicant has been a foster carer in the previous 12 months a written reference from their previous fostering service is obtained. If the previous fostering service does not provide a reference for whatever reason, interviews with two personal referees must be conducted.

The decision about whether or not the applicant has successfully completed stage 1 must be reached and the applicant should be informed within 10 working days of all information being received from stage 1 (The Fostering Services Regulation 26 (1A)).

Before the applicant is able to begin fostering, they will need to attend mandatory Skills to Foster training which is held at and ran by Happy Hearts Foster Care. Applicants/Foster Carers can attend this training at any stage of the application process, however, are encouraged to attend as soon as possible.

Stage 2 of the Assessment

1. Form F Assessment - If it is decided to undertake stage 2 of the assessment then Happy Hearts Foster Care uses a Coram BAAF Form F assessment tool. Following the initial visit, an assessor will be allocated to the prospective foster carer(s) and a panel date tentatively set. The assessor will visit the applicant's home approximately 7-10 times, to meet with and collect information about members of the household and the applicants' skills and experiences in relation to fostering.
2. In accordance with Regulation 26(2), the agency will obtain information about the applicant set out in Part 2 of Schedule 3 of the regulations:
 - details of personality;
 - persuasion;
 - racial origin, cultural and linguistic background and capacity to care for a child from any particular racial origin or cultural or religious background;
 - past and present employment or occupation, standard of living, leisure activity and interests;
 - previous experience (if any) of caring for their own and other children;
 - skills, competencies and potential relevant to their capacity to care effectively for a child placed with them.

3. The above information provided by the applicant will determine the outcome when considering the suitability of the them beginning the process of becoming a foster carer and the suitability of their household. A written Form F report will commence and presented to the fostering panel along with recommendations regarding any terms of approval.
4. In line with the Regulation 26 (3) if before the assessment is complete, information comes to light indicating that the applicant is unlikely to be suitable to foster, a 'brief report' will be compiled setting out details of the assessment done and the reasons for considering the applicant unsuitable. The applicant then will be:
 - notified that the brief report is to be sent to the panel;
 - provided with a copy of the brief report; and
 - given 10 working days from the date of the notification to send their own observations to Happy Hearts Foster Care

The brief report will then be presented to the fostering panel for consideration, along with any observations submitted by the applicant and any other relevant information regarding the application.

The Agency's Decision Maker receives the recommendations from the independent fostering panel about the suitability of the applicant and makes the final decision.

The Regulations only allow for the approval of individuals as suitable to foster. However, where two people will be sharing the care of a looked after child, whether they are a couple or any other partnership, the assessment of their suitability should be done jointly.

Information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on file in line with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Data Protection Act 1998. Some of this information can be viewed, however references from external agencies and personal references, which are given in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referee(s).

Approval of Foster Carers

The full assessment report must be presented to the fostering panel for consideration along with any observations submitted by the applicant and any other relevant information. These include a DBS check, Medical check, Health & Safety report of household etc.

The Agency's Decision Maker must take the panel recommendation into account.

Upon approval, a **Foster Carer Agreement** is completed. This covers a range of contractual information and undertakings, including:

- To care appropriately for children and young people in placement
- To inform Happy Hearts of any significant changes to their household or detail
- To follow the procedures as identified in the Happy Hearts Foster Carer Handbook

The Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

The Agency's Decision Maker is also responsible for deciding whether a person and their household remain suitable to foster, and whether the terms of approval remain suitable, following each review of the foster carer's approval. The decision should be based on the written report of the review; it must take into account any recommendations by the fostering panel (which must be provided on the occasion of the first review and may be provided for subsequent reviews) and any recommendations of the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM).

Once a foster carer is approved, they must be notified in writing along with any other terms of the approval.

Terms may specify, for instance, a maximum number of placements which may be made at any one time or an age range for children fostered. Terms may also include factors such as short term or long-term placements, short break care, parent and child placements or inclusion in a particular fostering scheme.

Post Approval Training

It is recognised that fostering has become increasingly demanding and complex. Happy Hearts Foster Care is committed to providing quality and comprehensive training that is accessible and relevant to our foster carers. Investing in people is one of our strongest values and we view our training programmes for carers as an important element of our support to them. Please refer to the Happy Hearts Foster Care Training Programme for more details.

Training needs of foster carers are identified throughout the year and arrangements are made for additional training that may seem necessary or requested.

Happy Hearts Foster Care provides training to:

- Help foster carers develop and refine the skills they need for their job
- Establish an explicit, positive framework of values, which promotes equality of opportunity

- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and protecting children from harm
- Encourage foster carers to achieve their Training Support and Development Standards (TSD)
- Enable foster carers to fulfil the expectations agreed in their Personal Development Plan (PDP)

TSD Standards

The Training, Support and Development Standards provide guidance for foster carers on the requirements for their training and development and continuous professional development. All newly approved foster carers have 12 months to complete their TSD from when they are approved as foster carers. Happy Hearts Foster Care provides advice and support to foster carers regarding the completion of the TSD workbooks. There is an expectation that carers need to evidence their learning throughout the year.

The Registered Manager has the quality assurance role and is also responsible for signing off the TSD workbooks.

Support for Foster Carers

Happy Hearts Foster Care values the work foster carers do and the contributions they make to the lives of looked after children.

Support for foster carers is one of the core values of Happy Hearts. It is important to us to make sure we provide an appropriate level of support to our foster care families to ensure positive, successful placements and stability for children in care.

A creative and flexible package of support is available to foster carers and children/young people in care. Identifying and arranging the necessary level of support required takes place when a foster carer and child/young person are “matched” at the placement planning stages. Support is monitored and tailored accordingly during the course of the placement.

Bespoke training will also be put in place where it is identified or deemed useful/necessary.

The following is provided to all foster carers:

Supervising Social Worker

- An induction for each new foster carer upon approval
- Monthly supervision visits
- Frequent contact with foster carers and children in placement through support from the SSW and Child’s Social Worker, visits, telephone calls etc
- Guidance and advice will be given to foster carers in relation to the care provided for the children and young people

- Liaise with other professionals who may be involved in the care of the child or young person and contribute to formal care plans
- Identify and help respond to foster carers' training needs
- Maintain accurate, up to date records of the progress on any matters relating to the foster carer and child/young person in placement

Support groups

- Monthly/Annual Foster Carer support groups
- Annual Support group meeting for children/young people in placement

Emergency support

- Support is provided 24/7 - 365 days a year through our on-call service

Fostertalk

- All foster carers are signed up to annual membership of the Fostertalk, paid for by Happy Hearts Foster Care. It provides advice and guidance as well as access to legal advice, mediation and insurance

Family Events

- Family events occur throughout the year and provide the opportunity to meet, socialise, make new friends and have fun
- Day out activities

Policies and Procedures

- All foster carers have access to The Foster Carer Handbook which provides access to Policies and Procedures, together with information and guidance on all aspects of fostering
- All information is regularly updated to comply with The Fostering Standards and Regulations

Reviews & Terminations of Approval of Foster Carers

Approval of all foster carers must be reviewed and a decision about suitability made within a year of approval and thereafter whenever it is felt necessary, but at intervals of no more than twelve months.

The review provides an opportunity to ensure that the quality of care provided meets the standards demanded by Happy Hearts Foster Care. To be effective, the review has to be based upon reliable evidence regarding the standard of care that has been provided.

The review is a key part of quality assurance at Happy Hearts Foster Care.

The review must consider whether the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable to foster. The agency must make whatever enquiries it considers necessary to inform this judgement, which may include checks in relation to any new members of the household. Specifically, it must take into account the views of:

- The foster carer
- Any child in current placement or in the previous 12 months
- Any placing local authority which has, within the preceding 12 months placed a child with the foster carer
- Birth Children and all other members of the fostering household
- Other enquires will also be made to ensure that Happy Hearts Foster Care obtain all relevant information they consider necessary in order to review whether the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable to foster

A written report of the review must be prepared and in the case of the first review this must be presented to the fostering panel for a recommendation. If it is decided, taking account of any recommendations from the fostering panel if applicable, that the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable, then the foster carer must be notified in writing.

The same procedure applies where a fostering service considers that a foster carer's terms of approval should be amended for example a foster carer only approved for 1 child but a sibling placement becomes available etc. unless, there is written agreement to the change from the foster carer and a written statement from the fostering service stating whether there are any support needs resulting from the change, and if so, what they are and how they will be met.

If a foster carer's approval is terminated, the foster carer must be notified in writing and a copy of the notice must be sent to the local authority. If the foster carer lives outside the area of the fostering service, their local authority must also be notified

A foster carer may at any point give written notice that they wish to resign from the role, in which case their approval is automatically terminated 28 days after receipt of the notice by the agency (regulation 28(13)).

The Agency Decision Maker does not have the power to decline a resignation as any resignation takes effect automatically after 28 days, but this need not prevent the fostering service from forming a view about the person's future suitability to be a foster carer.

Fostering services may wish to advise a foster carer who indicates that they are considering giving written notice of their resignation that once this is given, it automatically takes effect after 28 days regardless of whether the foster carer withdraws their notice or not. Should a foster carer who has resigned want to re-register as a foster carer, their suitability would need to be reassessed in line with the 2011 Regulations.

Once a foster carer has resigned the agency has no responsibility to confirm resignation through panel, although it may be helpful to notify the panel to inform its monitoring role.

Health and Wellbeing

Each child or young person in placement with a foster carer will be registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician. They will also be expected to attend LAC medical. Appointments will be made for them within three weeks of the placement starting. There will of course be an element of choice for children and young people being able maintain their original GP's (where practicable).

Health promotion is also undertaken by our foster carers who endeavour to develop and enhance the individual child or young person's knowledge and awareness of different health care aspects and ensuring that they have a better understanding of issues relating to health care/promotion. This is achieved through discussions with the foster carer and allocated social worker.

A health record is kept on each child or young person and every effort is made to obtain a medical history on each child or young person which will include, health needs, development, illnesses, operations, immunisations, allergies, any medications administered, dates and appointments with GP's and other specialists.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

A comprehensive Child Protection Policy is in operation at Happy Hearts Foster Care. This is because it is fully recognised that children and young people who are looked after are vulnerable and our responsibility as a caring organisation is to provide a safe and caring environment from which children and young people grow, develop and flourish. Therefore, our policy is that children and young people should always be believed in cases where an allegation of abuse is made. Our first priority in cases like these is to protect the child or

young person from the alleged perpetrator. It is of paramount importance that the child or young person making the allegation is reassured by the foster carer and/or staff at Happy Hearts Foster Care and are supported at all times.

Child protection investigations will be conducted within the remit of working together using a multi-disciplinary approach. This therefore will include investigations that are either a combination of an internal, criminal and/or external nature. A comprehensive Child Protection Policy supports this work.

This should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy/Procedural guidelines. A copy of this is available upon request

Our Inspecting Body

Ofsted

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Complaints & Compliments

In accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (Regulation 18) and National Minimum Standards (Std.1 & 21.11) Happy Hearts Foster Care has developed a written procedure for managing any complaints made by or about foster carers, looked after children or Happy Hearts Foster Care Staff.

We endeavour to deal with all complaints objectively and efficiently and view all complaints received as an opportunity to assist our learning and development as a fostering agency.

We expect complaints to be reported and recorded clearly, quickly and passed on to the relevant manager for their urgent consideration at the first opportunity.

We have a comprehensive complaints procedure, which is made widely available in different formats suitable for children, young people, carers, parents and professionals.

Complaints by Foster Carers

Happy Hearts foster Care recommends that any complaint made by a foster carer should in the first instance be discussed with their Supervising Social Worker. If they feel the complaint is not resolved to their satisfaction, we recommend they request a meeting with the complaints receiving officer and Supervising Social Worker to resolve any concerns. If they remain unsatisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint into writing to the Registered Manager for investigation.

Complaints by Children, Parents, Social Workers and General Public

On admission at the placement, each child or young person is given a copy of the “Young Person’s/Children’s Handbook” which has details of the Young Person’s/Children’s Complaints Procedure, the House Rules as well as useful information relating to Happy Hearts Foster Care. The handbook will be discussed fully with the young person to ensure that they have a full understanding of the foster carers’ house rules and their rights to complain. The Independent Reviewing Officer’s (IRO’s) details will also be given to the child.

The Supervising Social Worker, foster carer and child’s/young person’s Social Worker will be informed immediately of any complaint made by a young person or parent. The Supervising Social Worker will be responsible for supporting the foster carer to resolve the complaint directly and if needed a disruption meeting will be held with all relevant parties. If the complainant is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put their complaint into writing to the Directors for investigation.

All written complaints will be managed by the Registered Manager and they will receive a seven-day response to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and the process that will follow.

The investigation will be completed by a person appointed by the Registered Manager within 21 days. If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage, the complaint will be passed onto the regulatory authority, Ofsted.

Happy Hearts Foster Care is supported by a full procedural document pertaining to representations and complaints. This must be read in conjunction with the complaints procedure and is available upon request