

Bright futures



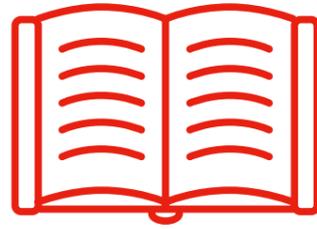
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**Action for Children Fostering Wales
Statement of Purpose 2021/22**

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Welcome

We know that fostering transforms children's lives.

Our wonderful foster parents offer children and young people love, support and stability. This is so important for the children we meet, who haven't always had the best start in life.

In this Statement of Purpose you'll read about our two fostering services in Wales: Fostering Wales and NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks.

Fostering Wales finds children and young people safe and loving family homes with expertly matched foster parents. NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks provides overnight respite care for children and young people with a disability. Both services give children and young people the care, support and opportunities they need to thrive.

If you have any questions or need more information, we're here to help.

“We are very happy with our fostering service. They are very supportive and we thank them for the brilliant work that they do.”



About Action for Children

We believe that every child and young person should have a safe and happy childhood.

We supported more than 368,000 children, young people and families in the UK last year. We did this in 503 services, in schools and online.

To make this happen, we rely on lots of incredible people. This includes our amazing foster parents.

Their dedication, love and commitment help us give more children the best start in life. They help to keep children safe and support those who are having a really difficult time.



Action for Children was founded in 1869 by the Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson. From our first permanent children's home, we've grown to offer hundreds of services to children, young people and families across the UK.

Action for Children is a leading UK children's charity (registered charity number 215301). We're governed by a Board of Trustees and operate to the highest ethical standards.

Action for Children (company number 04764232) and Action for Children Services Ltd (company number 02332388) are jointly responsible for care home services, fostering and domiciliary support.

We are family



Our vision

Every child and young person in the country has a safe and happy childhood, and the foundations they need to thrive.

Our values

We are

Passionate
Ambitious
Collaborative
Inclusive

Our mission

We protect and support children and young people by:

- *Providing practical and emotional care and support.*
- *Ensuring their voices are heard.*
- *Campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.*

The legal framework

This Statement of Purpose is designed to give you information about Action for Children and our fostering services in Wales. It covers our values and organisational structure, as well as our fostering recruitment, assessment and training processes. You'll meet the team and find out how our placements work, too.

We've developed this Statement to meet the necessary regulations, statutory guidance and national standards that apply to fostering providers. These include:

- The Registration and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.
- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- The Regulated Fostering Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019.

You can download both Welsh and English versions of this Statement from our website.



Fostering services in Wales

Our structure

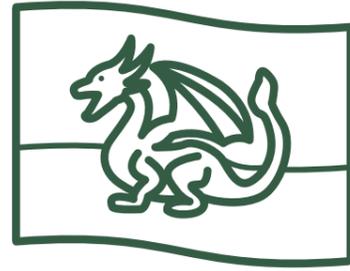


We run two fostering services in Wales:

Fostering Wales
is based in Newport.
We recruit, train and support foster families to look after children in South Wales.
We also have a satellite service in Mold, North Wales.

NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks
is based in Swansea and Neath.
We run short breaks for 0 to 18-year-olds who have a disability.

Adran 1: Maethu Cymru



Fostering Wales

We set up Action for Children Fostering Wales in Newport in 2002. Our North Wales base in Mold opened in 2020. Our core belief is that all children have the right to be part of a loving family. To make this happen, we offer a unique therapeutic approach that supports both the children who come into the care system and the families that look after them.

Our vision

We're passionate about giving children safe and loving family homes. We want:

- To help children build lasting relationships that give them a real sense of belonging. Our number one priority is permanence.
- All children to feel part of a family where they're loved and cherished.
- To help children feel safe at every moment of every day.
- Children to feel understood by the people who care for them.
- To help children recover from traumatic experiences and broken relationships.



Our objectives

- To recruit, train and support new foster families. We want to increase the number and diversity of foster parents to make sure every child has the right placement.
- To offer children and young people who can't live with their birth families high quality, nurturing care in a family setting.
- To work with others to put children first.
- To give children and young people security and stability, using attachment theory and our understanding of childhood trauma to inform everything we do.
- To respect and promote the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.
- To always consider the gender, sexuality and disability of children and young people when making placement decisions.
- To offer 24/7 support for foster parents, children and young people.
- To include the views of children and young people, families (if appropriate), foster families, local authorities and other agencies.
- To make sure foster parents and staff have the opportunity to learn and develop.
- To recruit foster parents from different backgrounds so that children and young people get the best possible match.
- To promote best practice and inform policy in Wales.

Meet the team



All of our brilliant staff are qualified social workers. They're registered with Social Care Wales. Our managers have a wealth of experience and qualifications, and are also qualified social workers registered with Social Care Wales.

Our Responsible Individual is Julie Gillbanks. Julie is an Operational Director and registered social worker. She also has a Diploma in Management Studies.

We sometimes use contracted staff and consultants to help us with our work, including panel members and an external clinical supervisor. Every person we employ has the right qualifications. We also follow the safer recruitment process so that children are protected.

Service Manager

Matt Lewis

matthew.lewis@actionforchildren.org.uk

Matt is an experienced social work manager and an accredited therapeutic practitioner. He's also a qualified social worker (registered as a fostering service manager). Matt's qualifications include BA (Hons) Communication Studies, a Diploma in Social Work, and Level 7 Agoreded accreditations in Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS), IFSS Management and Consultation, and Training the Trainer.

Team Manager

Rhian Carter

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Rhian is a qualified social worker with significant safeguarding experience. Rhian qualified in 2009 and has worked as a social worker and a senior practitioner in both a local authority children's services assessment team and a 16+ team. Rhian joined us in 2019 and manages supervising social workers and the transition worker. Her qualifications include a BSc in Social Work and a Graduate Certificate in Post Qualifying Social Work.

Therapeutic Lead Practitioner

William John Hodges

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John is a qualified social worker with more than 30 years' experience. He's worked as a senior therapist in child and adolescent mental health services, a specialist witness in complex parenting court assessments, and a senior practitioner and project lead at a family centre (specialising in attachment and developmental trauma in children). John's also been a child and family social worker, specialising in interviewing children who have been sexually abused.

John has a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work and is a qualified practise teacher and training facilitator. His article – 'Relationship Renaissance' – was published in the Adoption & Fostering Quarterly Journal (July 2017), and he has also produced three therapeutic resources: 'Beyond the Cave of Physical Safety' (2016), 'In Search of the Isle of Empathy' (2017) and 'The Attachment Line' (2018).



What we do



We find safe and loving homes for children in Wales who can't live with their families. This means different things for different children. For example, we find:

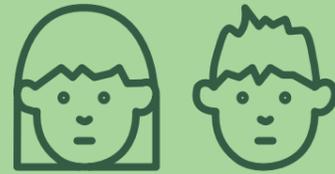
- Long-term families for children to grow up in.
- Families to look after children for a shorter amount of time.
- Families for brothers and sisters.
- Families that offer respite care.
- Families that offer short breaks for children who have disabilities.

The most important thing is getting each placement right for every child.

Supporting children's wellbeing

We want every child to have a safe and happy childhood free from fear or worry. We're focused on a child's wellbeing at every point of the fostering journey.

- When a child comes to us they're given an age-appropriate guide that explains everything they might want to know about fostering.
- We run a programme of events for both the children and families we support. We want to make sure people make memories and have fun together. We have our very own arts space at Beechwood Park in Newport, too, where we run activities throughout the year.
- We've developed a new outcomes-focused planning tool that focuses on children's wellbeing. It puts the seven wellbeing outcomes described in The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 at the heart of everything we do.
- We work in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 39: that every child gets the specialist support they need to recover from abuse and harm.



Getting children involved

We want to make sure children's voices are heard. Children can express their views creatively through activities like arts workshops, as well as through feedback forms, surveys and therapeutic work. We encourage children to have their say and get involved in other ways, for example by becoming Action for Children young ambassadors.



Our commitment to the Welsh language

We offer bilingual services to children, foster parents and professionals. When prospective foster parents first come to us, we offer both Welsh and English. We have Welsh speaking team members and foster parents, and Action for Children's Executive Leadership Team actively encourages the use of Welsh. Children whose first language is Welsh will have their communication needs met when matching with foster parents.

All our forms and policies, including this Statement, are available in Welsh.



Model of care

We use a family-based attachment and trauma approach that's informed by respected therapeutic perspectives. We integrate attachment theory and the impact of childhood developmental trauma into our fostering model.

We believe this is the best way to support and train foster parents, and to work with local authority and other partners. The work is led by our lead therapeutic practitioner and service manager. All of our team members and foster parents are trained in the approach.

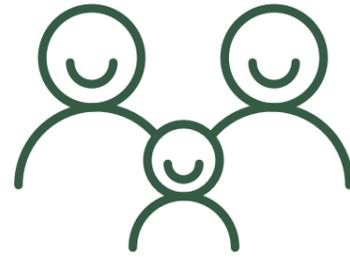
Support for foster families and professionals

Our services include:

- An 'attachment clinic', which is open to foster families, social workers and other professionals.
- Therapeutic consultation and support for foster families in their homes.
- Therapeutic consultation for staff in schools.
- Specifically commissioned 'therapeutic narrative life story work'.

We're always looking to improve our services. We want everyone – from children to foster families – to get the best possible support.

Being a foster parent with us



The assessment and approval process

Fostering a child is an incredibly rewarding thing to do. We do understand, though, that the process of becoming a foster parent can be daunting. We guide prospective parents through their fostering journey, offering support every step of the way.

A foster parent's journey is broken down into the following steps:

1. We get in touch with anyone who makes an enquiry to have an initial chat.

2. If appropriate, a member of our team will visit the person at home.

3. After the visit, our team manager will decide whether to continue with the process.

4. If we don't go ahead, we'll call or write to let the person know.

5. If we agree to go ahead, the applicant(s) are invited to our Skills to Foster course to learn a bit more about fostering.

6. If the applicants want to carry on, we'll then do a full assessment.

7. We'll do all the necessary checks and, when complete, the family and assessor are invited to our fostering panel.

8. The panel makes a recommendation about whether to approve the applicant(s) to foster.

9. Our Agency Decision Maker (ADM) makes the final decision based on the panel's recommendation.



Support and training

Our foster parents are doing something special and we want to make sure they're looked after properly.

Everyone who fosters with us follows our annual training programme. Sessions cover the essentials, like child safety and development, as well as policies and procedures. We also run specialist training to help foster parents to look after children who have been hurt, neglected or suffered abuse. This gives them the knowledge to fully support these children. Foster parents can also get support from our specialist therapeutic practitioner. We explain some of the issues young people deal with, too, like bullying on social media and gang culture.

Our calendar is packed with family events, from picnics and trips to the zoo, to a friendly 'cake off' competition. We love spending time together and encourage foster families to build strong support networks through groups and social events.

All of our foster parents have monthly supervision and a regulatory yearly review. This takes in lots of people's views, including those of professionals and children. Each review is looked at by our ADM.

We ask that foster parents keep a record of their caring role, go to meetings, and take part in the review processes.

We make sure that our foster parents are never out of pocket. Our fostering allowances are in line with the national minimum standards and are paid fortnightly. We give carers written guidance on what the allowances cover and the expenses they can claim. Foster parents are also paid a fostering fee.

Monitoring and evaluation



We closely monitor our services to make sure our children, young people and foster families get the best possible support. This includes:

- Annual reviews with foster parents.
- Listening to children and making sure their voices are heard.
- Monthly supervision with foster parents.
- Regular staff supervision and annual appraisals.
- Feedback from foster parents about the training we offer.
- Feedback from professionals.
- Feedback from the local authority and trust workers at looked after child (LAC) reviews.
- Feedback from the local authority and trust workers before foster parent reviews.
- Quality of care reviews.
- Feedback from regulatory bodies.

Complaints and whistleblowing



Complaints

Our complaints procedure is available to all families and children. We take complaints extremely seriously. A three-stage process is in place to make sure every issue or complaint is properly resolved.

Stage 1

A manager meets with the complainant to find out what's happened and to try to resolve things there and then.



Stage 2

If it isn't possible to sort out the problem informally, then a manager is appointed to formally investigate the complaint. They'll prepare a report with recommendations.



Stage 3

If the issue can't be resolved at stage 2, then an independent person will investigate the complaint. This person will speak to the complainant and write a report with recommendations.

Whistleblowing

We expect the highest standards of integrity from our staff and foster parents. Our whistleblowing policy encourages people to speak out if they come across anything that worries them or falls below our expectations.

All our social workers are expected to abide by their registration standards and codes of practice.

Get in touch

South Wales office

The Old Stables
Beechwood park
Newport
NP19 8AJ
01633 270422

Manager:

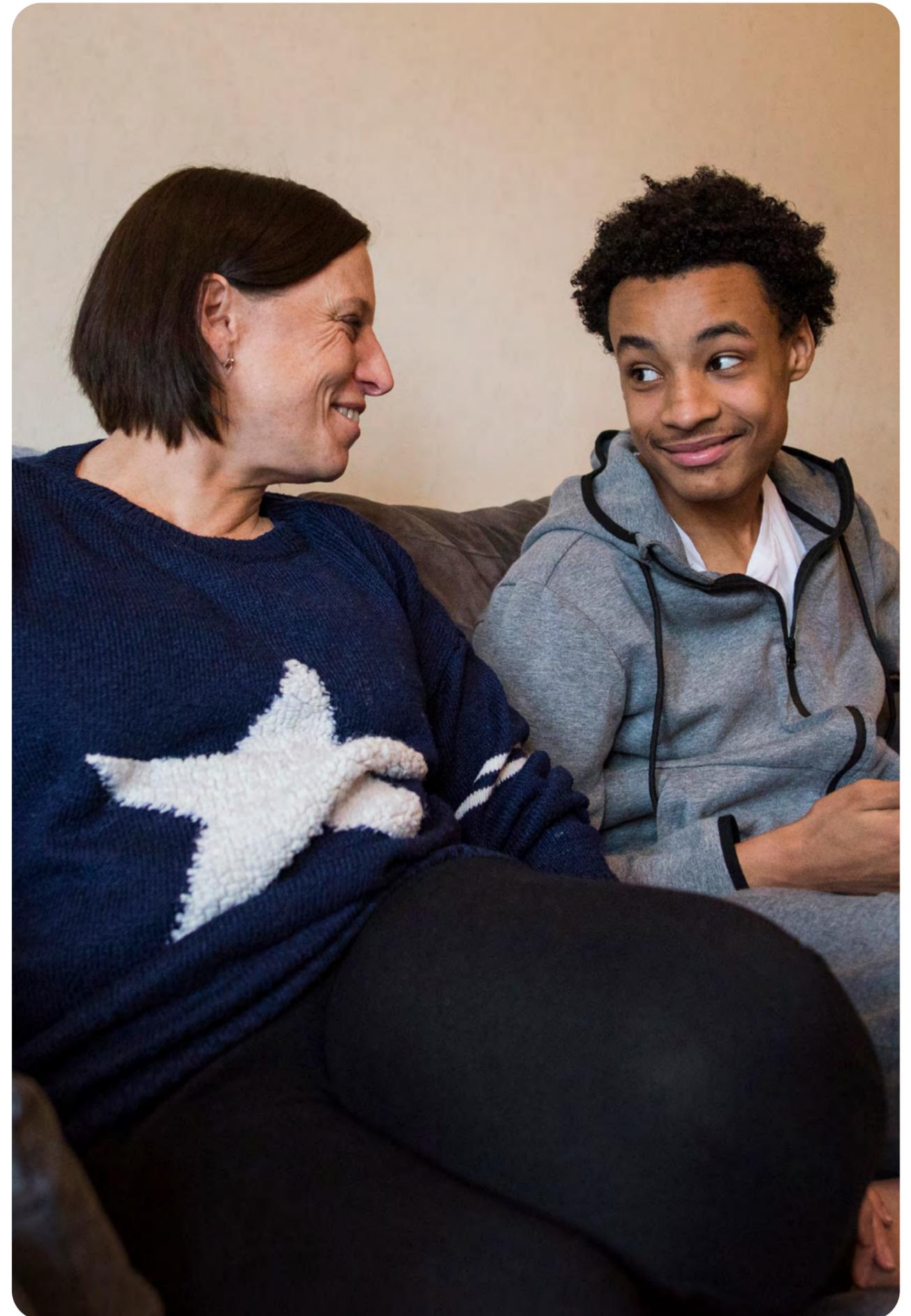
matthew.lewis@actionforchildren.org.uk

North Wales office

24 Mold Business Park
Wrexham Road
Mold
CH7 1XP
01352 759597

Responsible Individual:

julie.gillbanks@actionforchildren.org.uk



Section 2: NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks



NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks

NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks is a partnership between Action for Children, Neath Port Talbot County Council and Swansea City Council's Children's Services. We've been working together since 1998.

We run short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. Our wonderful staff and foster parents are fully trained and make sure children with a wide variety of needs get the right support, have fun, and learn new things. The children who come on our breaks stay in the homes of our short break foster parents.

Our vision

- To empower children and young people to take part in leisure, sports and cultural activities of their choice.
- To give children the chance to try different things and meet new people.
- To help children learn and grow so they can fulfil their potential.

Our objectives

- To run high quality, nurturing short breaks in a family setting for children and young people with disabilities.
- To focus on what children can do, not what they can't, and make sure every child has the same opportunities.
- To offer fun, safe and happy places for children.
- To make sure every child has a good time, builds independence and works towards agreed goals.
- To encourage children to have new experiences and develop relationships.
- To give parents and/or carers the chance to rest, unwind and spend time with other family members.
- To respect and promote the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.

- To always consider the gender, sexuality and disability of children and young people when making placement decisions.
- To include the views of children and young people, families (if appropriate), foster families, local authorities and other agencies.
- To offer 24/7 support for both children and foster parents during their break.
- To make sure foster parents and staff have the chance to learn and develop.
- To recruit foster parents from different backgrounds so that children and young people get the right match.
- To promote best practice and inform policy in Wales.



Meet the team



All of our fantastic staff are qualified social workers registered with Social Care Wales. Our managers have a wealth of knowledge and qualifications, too – as well as being registered social workers. Julie Gillbanks is our Responsible Individual. She's an Operational Director and registered social worker. Julie also has a Diploma in Management Studies.

The team works closely with colleagues across the health, education and care sectors. Our staff and carers have considerable experience supporting young people with disabilities and their families.

Service Manager

Myfanwy Bater

myfanwy.bater@actionfordchildren.org.uk

Myfanwy is a qualified social worker with safeguarding and management experience in both the voluntary and statutory sectors.

Myfanwy qualified in 1995. She's worked in a variety of positions, including social worker, senior practitioner, duty manager and team manager in children's services. Myfanwy joined Action for Children over 10 years ago. She was appointed children's services manager (CSM) for the Bridgend and NPT Family Support Cluster.

In 2017, Myfanwy became the CSM for Cardiff and the Vale Disability Services before moving into her current role. Myfanwy has a Diploma in Social Work and an NVQ Level 4 in Leadership and Management.

Practice Manager

Caroline Lewis

caroline.lewis@actionforchildren.org.uk

Caroline is a qualified social worker who's worked with children in lots of different roles and settings. Her previous jobs include resource worker, a nursery nurse in schools, a youth club leader, and a special needs activity club coordinator.

Caroline took her current position in September 2011. In December 2012, she also became registered manager for the Family Link service and POPS. Caroline's worked with children who have disabilities for more than 24 years.

Caroline has a Diploma in Social Work, a BTEC in Nursery Nursing and EDI Level 5 Management, and is an Administration of Medication trainer.



What we do

We run short breaks for children and young people with disabilities.

Our staff and foster parents make sure these children get the best possible support, have fun, and do lots of activities. The children stay in the homes of our short break foster parents. The breaks are open to 0 to 18-year-olds.

Foster parents typically look after one child at any one time (unless the children are part of a sibling group or if approval allows for more). The number of nights each child stays depends on their needs, which are determined by an assessment done by social services.

The children and young people we meet have a variety of complex needs. We support children and young people who have epilepsy, brain injuries, autism, ADHD, cerebral palsy, severe challenging behaviour, and communication difficulties.

All of our staff and carers are fully trained, and have experience of working with children who have complex needs.

Supporting children's wellbeing

It's really important that every child and young person gets the most out of their short break. We support them to take part in different activities, encouraging them to do what they enjoy and, when appropriate, to try new things. We want children to have fun, meet people, learn and grow.

We also support children who show challenging behaviours. To ensure every child's wellbeing, we work with the child's school, case manager and behavioural specialists. We put together behaviour plans to support the child, and carers are trained to give support. We currently have two Team Teach trainers at the service.

Carers are also trained to administer medication. They follow strict medication policies and procedures. A qualified health professional

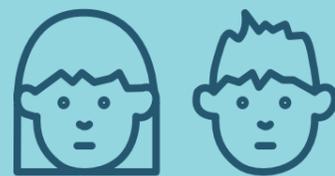
teaches staff and carers how to use specialist equipment, like gastro feeding systems and hoists, follow manual handling requirements, and put risk assessments in place.

Communication and language

We're committed to offering bilingual services for children, foster parents and professionals. We have Welsh speaking team members and foster parents, and Action for Children's Executive Leadership Team actively encourages the use of Welsh.

All our forms and policies, including this Statement, are available in Welsh.

We communicate with children and young people in the way that works best for them. Our staff and foster parents are encouraged to learn different methods of communication, like PECS and Makaton.



Getting children involved

Children's views, choices and feedback are really important to us. We make sure every child has a big say about what they do on their short breaks.

Each child is given a guide that explains everything they need to know about short breaks. This includes information about who they can talk to if things aren't right and how to make a complaint.

We also get children's views through the review process and unannounced visits.

Being a short breaks foster parent with us



The assessment and approval process

We want the journey to become a short breaks foster parent to be as straightforward as possible. Our goal is to guide people through each stage, offering support every step of the way.

The process of becoming a short breaks foster parent is broken down into the following stages:

- 1.** We get in touch with anyone who makes an enquiry to have an initial chat.
- 2.** If appropriate, a member of our team will visit the person at home.
- 3.** After the visit, our team manager will decide whether to continue with the process.
- 4.** If we don't go ahead, we'll call or write to let the person know.
- 5.** If we agree to go ahead, then a Form F assessor will start a full assessment. This can take up to six months.
- 6.** During this process, applicants are invited to our Preparation for Fostering training.
- 7.** We'll do all the necessary checks and, when complete, the family and assessor are invited to our fostering panel.
- 8.** The panel makes a recommendation about whether to approve the applicant(s) to foster.
- 9.** Our Agency Decision Maker (ADM) makes the final decision based on the panel's recommendation.



Support and training

Our short breaks foster parents are doing an incredible thing and we want to make sure they're looked after properly.

The programme includes several core courses to help foster families in their first two years. It supports carers to meet any training needs identified through assessment and supervision. We recently updated our training to reflect our attachment-based approach.

We also run specialist training to help foster parents look after children who have been hurt, neglected or suffered abuse. This gives them the knowledge to fully support these children. Foster parents can also get support from our specialist therapeutic practitioner. We explain some of the issues young people deal with, too, like bullying on social media and gang culture. Everyone's encouraged to keep a portfolio of the training they've done.

All our foster parents have monthly supervision and a regulatory yearly review. They're supported to do this by the supervising social worker. The review takes in lots of views, including those of professionals and children.

A review report is prepared by the social worker and the family. This is then presented to the panel or a reviewing officer. The review looks at important events, any major life changes, training, standards of care, and the home environment. The decision to continue a carer's registration, de-register or make changes to the registration is approved by the ADM. Unannounced visits also take place twice a year.

Our calendar is packed with family events, from picnics and trips to the zoo, to a friendly 'cake off' competition. We love spending time together and encourage foster families to build strong support networks through groups and social events.

Regular support groups also give foster parents the chance to share their experiences. They can get 24/7 support through our on-call system, too.

All our foster parents get an allowance for each overnight short break. Our fostering allowances are in line with the national minimum standards and are paid monthly. We give carers guidance on what the allowances cover and what expenses can be claimed.

Monitoring and evaluation



We closely monitor our short breaks to make sure children, young people and foster families are safe and have the best time.

This includes:

- Tracking the progress children make.
- Getting feedback from children – for example, through forms and surveys.
- Getting feedback from foster parents – for example, about training and through a yearly survey.
- Foster parent annual reviews.
- Monthly supervision of foster parents and members of the team.
- Monthly team meetings.
- Yearly staff appraisals.
- Monitoring by other organisations – for example, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- Feedback from other professionals.
- Safeguarding audits and reports to Action for Children's head of safeguarding.

Complaints



Complaints

Our complaints procedure is shared with foster families and children. We take all complaints and allegations extremely seriously.

We'll always try to resolve a complaint at a local level first, if possible. This is usually done by a team manager.

If the complaint can't be sorted out at stage 1, it moves on to stage 2. The complainant can also choose to take their complaint directly to stage 2. At stage 2, the Responsible Individual may ask for a full investigation.

All complaints are reported to both CIW and Action for Children's head of safeguarding.

Stage 1

A manager meets with the complainant to find out what's happened and to try to resolve things there and then.



Stage 2

If it isn't possible to sort out the problem informally, then a manager is appointed to formally investigate the complaint. They'll prepare a report with recommendations.



Stage 3

If the issue can't be resolved at stage 2, then an independent person will investigate the complaint. This person will speak to the complainant and write a report with recommendations.

Get in touch

NPT Swansea Community Short Breaks

Suite 15, Shaw Trust Disability Action Centre
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Safe and happy childhood



Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

Action for Children

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