Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Social Services Department undertakes its legal duties in relation to placements of children in family placements through the Knowsley Adoption and Fostering Team. A close working relationship exists with the Social Work Teams, the Fostering Service and partner agencies within the Local Authority and in the Area Health and Police Service.

The Purpose of the Knowsley Fostering Service is to provide foster placements for those children residing in the Borough, whose needs have been assessed as requiring such services.

The aims and objectives of the service

The purpose of the Knowsley Fostering Service is to provide foster placements for those children residing in the Borough, whose needs have been assessed as requiring such services.

The aims of the service are:

- Meet the needs of all Knowsley's Looked After Children who have been assessed as requiring a foster placement, whether this is temporary foster care, short breaks, respite or permanent foster care placements.

The objectives of the service are:

- To provide Looked After Children with a safe, nurturing family experience, which will promote their health and educational achievement.
- To provide Looked After children with family experiences, which will assist them in reaching their full potential and assisted them to come to terms with their life experiences.
- To provide a variety of foster placement types to meet the needs of children who need to be looked after through temporary, permanent and respite foster care.
- To offer training and support to all carers, which will provide the necessary skills to care for Looked After Children and develop and enhance their potential.
- To recruit and assess potential foster carers in a consistent and transparent manner.
- To retain a skilled body of carers to meet the needs of the children looked after.
- To provide a resource as part of the services to children who are fostered with a family member.
- To meet the Key aims of the local authority and the objectives of the Children's Strategic Plan.
- To support Looked After Children to be safe, healthy and learning.

The service is part of the Children and Families Division of Knowsley Social Services; Senior Management responsibility within this structure is with the Service Manager. Direct day-to-day management of the service is the responsibility of the Manager Terry Douglas and the Senior Practitioners, Marie Smith, Fostering and Carol Evans, Adoption. Either will however, deputise for the manager in her absence.

The service is based at:

Astley House, Astley Road, Huyton, Knowsley L36 8HY

Tel: 0151 443 3928 Fax: 0151 443 0134
e-mail: terry.douglas@knowsley.gov.uk

Astley House provides office accommodation for the Team, training facilities for carers and crèche facilities.

The Service is assisted in undertaking its roles and responsibilities to those children in foster placements by other specialist services within the Social Services Department and by the purchasing of services to meet identified need.

- Specialist Health Staff for Looked After Children
- Specialist Educationalists for Looked After Children
- Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Specialist Leisure Worker for Looked After Children
- The Family Support Service
- The Flexible Support Team
- Independent Trainers
- KATY
- Children's Representations and Complaints Service
- Principal Officer with reviewing responsibilities.
The service provides:

- **Specialist advice** to the social work teams regarding foster placements.
- **The recruitment of foster carers**, through undertaking local recruitment campaigns, in the press, publications, local radio and displaying banners and posters in and around the Borough. There is also information about fostering in Knowsley on the Borough’s website and the Mersey Consortium website.
- **Pre-approval training** to prospective foster carers. All general foster carers attend pre-approval training before being assessed by a Social Worker from the team. The pre approval training is provided by social workers from the team and is in two parts, each of 2 days. The training times are flexible to meet the commitments of the prospective foster carers.
- **The assessment** of all applicants is a competency based assessment and the BAAF Form F will be used to present the assessment to the Fostering Panel for approval. Carers will continue to evidence their competency in the caring task and develop a portfolio of their skills.
- **Post approval training** to all approved carers. A full years training is provided, and a calendar of training events is provided to all carers. NVQ 3 is offered to carers. The Social Workers from the service provide much of the training to carers along with other staff within the Department and independent trainers are sought to meet that part of the training programme not otherwise met by our own staff. In addition there is a monthly support group for foster carers and guest speakers are provided as required.
- **Supervision and support to all carers.** All carers have an allocated support Social Worker from the team.
- **Monitoring and review** of all foster carers registration is undertaken annually. A Principal Officer for the Quality Assurance Unit chairs all foster carer reviews. Placing Social Workers and children placed are able to contribute to these reviews. The Chair reports quarterly to the fostering panel.
- **The Fostering Panel** is administered from the team and the professional advisor to the panel comes from the Fostering Service. The Panel meets monthly and there are multi-agency representations as well as independent members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terry Douglas</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>MA, BA (Hons) DASS CQSW NVQ4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Smith</td>
<td>Senior Snr. Practitioner Fostering (Full Time)</td>
<td>CQSW. NVQ4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Roberts</td>
<td>Social Worker (Full Time)</td>
<td>Dip SW. PQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Murphy</td>
<td>Social Worker (Full Time)</td>
<td>MA. BA (Hons) Dip SW. PQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Nodwell</td>
<td>Social Worker (Full Time)</td>
<td>BA (Hons) CQSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Corcoran</td>
<td>Social Worker (Full Time)</td>
<td>Dip SW. BA (Hons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Kehoe</td>
<td>Social Worker (Full Time)</td>
<td>BA (Hons) Dip SW. PQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Nelson</td>
<td>Social Worker (Part Time)</td>
<td>CQSW. DASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Skinner</td>
<td>Social Worker (Part Time)</td>
<td>BA (Hons) CQSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Griffiths</td>
<td>Social Worker (Part Time)</td>
<td>Dip SW. BA (Hons) MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty McEvoy</td>
<td>Admin (Part Time)</td>
<td>RSA 1 Book Keeping RSA 1, 2 &amp; 3 Typing &amp; Word Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Shelly</td>
<td>Admin (Part Time)</td>
<td>RSA1 Word Processing RSA1 Audio &amp; Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Campbell</td>
<td>Admin (Full Time)</td>
<td>NVQ 3 Business Administration RSA 2 Information Technology RSA 1, 2 &amp; 3 Word Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Howard</td>
<td>Finance Admin</td>
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</table>
The principles which the service is based upon are outlined in the Departments Fostering Policy and are as follows:

- **Children’s needs are paramount.** All work within the Fostering Service is guided by the imperative to determine and act upon what is in the best interests of the child.

- **Fostering is a positive option for children of any age,** whose need for temporary or permanent care cannot be met within their own birth family.

- **Fostering is set within the context of services to support families,** in looking after their children and recognising that children’s needs are not met by one agency alone but work in partnership with Health, Education and parents and wider family members.

- **Transparency and consistency** will inform all work and activities within the Fostering Service.

- **Recognition of wishes and feelings of the child’s birth parents and significant relatives,** are afforded high priority by the Fostering Service.

- **Valuing diversity.** Fostering Services are sensitive to and would wish to provide services that meet the needs of individuals. Crucially, the issues of race, religion, culture, language, gender, marital status, sexual orientation and disability would be positively supported within all the Fostering processes.

- **Recognising the importance of identity.** Fostering does not change a child’s history. Full information will be made available to foster carers, and to children, as appropriate, to enable them to know and understand what has happened in the child’s life.

- **Ongoing support to foster carers.** Approved foster carers will receive regular support through the Fostering Service Social Workers and Social Workers for the children. In addition, support will be provided by other agencies as outlined in the child’s care plan. Foster carers will also have access to regular post approval training opportunities.

Through training and experience carers can progress through the Skills levels. There are 4 skills levels and each level carries an increasing financial payment. For further details see the ‘Payment for Skills Foster Carer Scheme’.

- **Matching children’s needs to carers’ abilities.** Wherever possible, a child will be placed with a carer who can meet their needs. If this is not possible, foster carers will be assisted and supported by other staff of the Department to meet those needs in the short term. Matching for permanence through fostering will always be a recommendation of the Agency Adoption and Permanence Panel.

- **Fostering support and services.** All foster carers will have access to individual support/supervision through a nominated Social Worker from the Fostering Service. A mentoring system is also available to provide further support to carers. Each new carer will have a mentor allocated for the first year after approval.

- **Complaints** by and against foster carers will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. If there is dissatisfaction with the service then initially these should be brought to the attention of the Manager of the Service.

Staff of the team will ensure that carers understand how to make a complaint and all prospective carers receive information about the Departments Complaints Procedure in the Recruitment Pack.

The Department’s Professional Abuse Procedures will be evoked where a carer is accused of harming a child by their behaviour, or actions or inactions.

*The Commission for Social Care Inspection, 2nd Floor, South Wing, Burlington House, Crosby Road North, Liverpool. L22 0LG*