



BREAK FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

MARCH 2016



Responsible Individual: Hilary Richards

Registered Manager: Hilary Walshe



Break is a Norfolk based children's charity and has been delivering quality care to children and young people for over 40 years.

Section 1 Our Mission Statement, Values and Ethos

All looked after children and young people deserve the best possible care. Break is committed to providing a therapeutic fostering service so that our young people

- feel safe
- feel healthy
- feel that they belong
- believe they can achieve
- know that their contribution is valued

We always keep children and young people at the centre of everything we do.

Our Aims

- Break's Fostering Service provides therapeutic foster placements to children and young people who need nurture and care to enable them to live fulfilled lives. Young adults will be able to remain with their foster carers until the age of 21, where it is in their best interests and agreed by the LA.
- We promote positive outcomes in all aspects of a child's life.
- We listen to young people, foster carers, and commissioners in order to continually improve our service
- We are a not-for profit charitable provider so that any surplus we make goes back into our service
- We recruit and retain the highest quality foster carers from a variety of backgrounds.
- We offer the highest quality support, supervision, therapeutic input and access to resources to ensure the highest quality care to children and young people.
- We safeguard and promote the well-being of young people and children as being of prime importance.

Our Values

- To support the positive contribution that each and every individual has to make
- To uphold the right of people to be treated with dignity and respect
- To be committed to providing a safe, secure, healthy and empowering environment
- To recognise and uphold the spirit of our founders and their commitment to a caring vocation
- A commitment to doing our utmost to provide the best possible care and support to enable people to fulfil their potential

Our Principles

Break constantly aspires to work to the Nolan principles of Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Clear Leadership for the benefit of the people we care for, as well as our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and friends. These principles form the ethical base of our entire decision making.

Our Objectives

- We want our young people to feel cared for and inspired by their foster carers to achieve. We only recruit, assess and train foster carers of the highest quality.
- All Break foster carers are committed to working therapeutically, committed to undertake regular training and committed to the children and young people placed with them. Break foster carers provide safe care, reasonable boundaries and challenge their young people to aim high. We are committed to ensuring that each young person is cared for in line with their care plan and to achieve the desired outcomes of the placement.
- We work in partnership with Norfolk Children's Services, other Local Authorities and other relevant agencies to ensure that children and young people are given the best opportunities available to them.
- We work in line with all legal requirements, including legislation, regulations and minimum standards as laid out in The Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Care Standards Act 2000 and subsequent amendments made in 2013 and 2015.

Section 2 Management and the Fostering Team

Break has a very enthusiastic management team who are passionate about providing our young people with excellent care.

The person with legal responsibility for the service or **Responsible Individual** is Hilary Richards. Hilary has 20 years post qualification experience in Social Care, predominantly working with vulnerable children and families, initially working in Cleveland before moving to Norfolk in 1997. She spent 4½ years in Norfolk working in the field of child protection followed by a further 4 years as a senior practitioner.

Hilary worked for 5½ years as a Social Care Inspector with Norfolk County Council's Registration and Inspection Unit, the National Care Standards Commission and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. She joined Break in January 2007 as an Operations Manager and subsequently became Divisional Director of Care for Break in September 2010; becoming Chief Executive for Break on first of April 2015, she continues to discharge the duties of Agency Decision Maker.

Hilary's Qualifications

BA degree (Hons) in Business Studies 2.1

Diploma in Social Work

MA in Applied Social Studies

Accredited Practice Teacher

Executive Diploma in Management

The day to day management of the service is provided by the **Registered Manager** Hilary Walshe. Hilary has 25 years post qualification experience in children's Social Care. She has a background in Child Protection and Court Work, and has worked in Fostering as a social worker, then Assistant Team Manager in Children's Services since 2003. She has lectured in Social Work practice, fostering and adoption at the University of East Anglia and Anglia Polytechnic University and is a practice educator at the University. She has a particular interest in therapeutic care for children, and the impact this type of fostering can have on

children. She continues her involvement with the University of East Anglia particularly in contributing to the research into the progress young people make in Break therapeutic fostering with regard to their education, social development and health.

Hilary's Qualifications

M.A. in Social Work and C.Q.S.W. 1986
Post Qualifying Practice Teaching Award 1994
Post Qualifying Child Care Award 2003
Fostering Changes Facilitator 2010

Social Workers

All our social workers are qualified, and all have experience of working with children and families, and fostering. They all have a particular interest in a therapeutic approach to fostering and are able to give time and energy to the foster carers as we ensure small caseloads. Each foster caring household has an allocated social worker, and also, due to the specialist nature and skills of our team, we are able to have an overview of all our foster carers and young people placed.

Our psychotherapist runs fortnightly therapeutic support groups for foster carers and can offer individual sessions as needed. He is a qualified psychotherapist with a special interest in child and adolescent psychotherapy.

The Voice of the Child

Children within our service have fed back to us and their social workers that they feel safe, cared for and part of their fostering families. We want to continually improve our service and ensure the children we have with us have a positive and far-reaching experience living with our foster carers. We provide a number of opportunities for our children placed to put forward their views and feelings. We recognise that many children need to express themselves in a variety of ways. Not all children can verbalise their feelings and wishes, nor do they like responding to on-line questionnaires. So as well as being consulted as part of the Review process, we ensure our children are familiar with the fostering support worker and often a worker independent of the fostering service. Different mediums are used such as art, play, drama and stories. Their behaviours and presentations are also noted in order to acquire as accurate a picture as possible about their feelings and wishes.

Before placement the child receives a Guide where they can put down (in picture, photo or written form) their likes and dislikes, wishes and fears, so we and their new foster carers can be aware of these before they move in with their foster family.

The Guide also outlines for the child a number of people they can talk to if they are not happy, or if they want to complain about anything. Break Fostering takes any complaints or allegations seriously. (See Section (9))

Section 4 Our Therapeutic Fostering Service

Why is Break providing a therapeutic fostering service?

The traditional approach to providing services for looked after children does not work for all children and young people. Break recognises that each young person is an individual with individual needs, so need bespoke care.

Social workers know that many children and young people need therapeutic care; however there is a real shortage of this. Young people who are looked after have experienced trauma often through separation and loss, abuse or neglect. This can sometimes mean that they present the adults around them with challenges in the way they behave. There is an expectation from government that children and young people's services should meet the needs of children, young people and their families and not be designed around professional boundaries.

Break's Therapeutic Fostering Service

Break recognises that young people need individual care.

Break's therapeutic fostering service focuses on meeting the needs of;

- Single placements for children with particularly complex needs and/or challenging behaviours
- Children and young people aged 7-17 with attachment disorders
- Children who have suffered multiple placement breakdowns
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour towards other children or adults
- Children with known traumatic early life experiences
- Sibling groups
- Short breaks to support families or foster carers.
- Parent and Baby placements

Desired Outcomes

- **Break provides foster carers for children and young people who make them feel safe and secure.**

Our foster carers will ensure that the child or young person's needs are always put first. We always ensure that our recruitment of staff and foster carers puts child safety first. We encourage and support children and young people to have safe contact with their birth families and friends. Children report feeling "safe" and "cared for". (Ofsted)

- **All children and young people placed with Break's Fostering Service feel that their health needs are provided for.**

We ensure that all children and young people receive appropriate health care and where possible involve young people in making decisions in relation to their health. Break aspires to the majority of young people leaving Break's Fostering Service having noticeably more stable emotional and mental health as well as increased resilience than when they were first placed.

- **All children and young people placed with Break foster carers feel part of their foster family, have a sense of belonging and know that they have a wider Break family who cares for them.**

We understand that everyone deserves to be accepted for who they are. Children and Young people tell us they feel fully part of their foster family. They report feeling as though they belong, and are valued. For those who have contact with their birth family it is where appropriate facilitated by the foster carers, in a way that gives the child a positive sense of identity. Break is committed to being part of these young people's lives for as long as they need us into adulthood and will always respect their birth families. Young people leaving foster care from Break are able to access Break's Transition service for practical support and advice. Break is committed to ensuring that we are an equal opportunities organisation that confronts all forms of discrimination and celebrates difference. The relationship between the child/young person and their foster carer is of vital importance and should be safeguarded.

- **All children and young people placed with Break foster carers have opportunities to enjoy and achieve and feel hopeful about their future.**

Break foster carers encourage and support young people's education, community involvement and aspirations for the future. They work on the young person's Break foster carers are "pushy parents" who are strong advocates for their young people and ensure that they have opportunities to enjoy and achieve. All young people are supported in their education with the intention that they achieve the highest possible outcomes.

We work to the young person's care plan to ensure that the outcomes of the placement are met. It is the expectation that most young people will leave care after they become 18 rather than before, unless it is different in their care plan. Young people leaving foster care will be well prepared for independence and be engaged in positive activities.

- **All children and young people placed with Break foster carers know that their contribution is valued in the day to day running of their lives and in the planning for their future.**

We value and respect our young people and want to improve the services we provide based on their feedback. We involve young people in the recruitment of our staff and foster carers. We take complaints from young people very seriously and always investigate them.

The Therapeutic Approach

Break Therapeutic Fostering offer single placements in a therapeutic environment for young people who have suffered trauma, loss and abuse. Break aims to provide young people with therapeutic foster placements to allow them to maximize their life chances. There are no emergency placements, but each placement will be carefully matched and planned.

Break recognises that some young people need additional support and understanding from their foster carers. Our Therapeutic Fostering Service is aimed at young people aged between 7 - 17 who have complex emotional, behavioural and attachment difficulties, those who have experienced abuse and trauma, those who have had multiple placement moves and parent and baby placements. Our Team consists of experienced social workers with extensive experience of therapeutic direct work, working with adolescents and in fostering. We also have a psychotherapist,

trained specifically in child and adolescent psychotherapy. As a key member of the team around the child, we aim to work closely with you to identify the young person's needs and to review how we are meeting these.

A young person's development is so dependant on the relationships and attachments experienced in their early years. The way in which they relate to other people and to situations can be understood better when their early life experiences are understood. Break therapeutic Fostering understand, and incorporate into their recruitment, approval, support and supervision the need for foster carers to realize how children's early experiences impact on their behaviours and needs, and that the carers feel confident in addressing these and know where to seek advice.

Young people may have developed acute survival skills and are able to present themselves well on occasion, but are often unable to maintain this behaviour at home or at school. They may have little control of physical sensations, over-react to minor events, become aggressive or withdrawn, not know how much to eat or how to eat or behave in social situations etc. They may be fearful of rejection and as a way of increasing their control over their lives may deliberately act in ways to encourage rejection. These children need security and stability in their lives to start the recovery process.

We have respite foster carers as part of the scheme. These carers will always have the same child and will get to know them so that the child's experience will be like staying with an aunt and uncle and will be familiar people in the child's life. They work closely with the full time carers to offer consistency.

Therapeutic Environment

The basis of the therapeutic environment given by the foster carers is to build trust with the child in the form of a secure base. The aim is that the young person develops a sense of belonging within the family, and our carers are committed to the long term/permanency of the young person within their family. This secure base is achieved by giving the young person consistency and by the day to day "re-parenting" of the young person in a predictable and caring way, with clear boundaries and expectations, modelled by the carers. This will enable the young person to feel valued and contained, and overall to feel safe. From this, self-regulation and self esteem will begin to emerge, so that behaviours and educational attainment can be addressed. The relationship between the foster carer and the child is integral, and developing a trusting and secure relationship is central to the therapeutic relationship. We can also provide additional individual therapeutic input with young people if agreed at the start of the placement at extra cost.

Section 5 Our Approved Foster Carers

Break understands that a young person's development is so dependant on relationships and attachments experienced in their early months and years. Their resultant ability to relate to others and to situations needs to be understood. Their behaviours are communication, whether they are withdrawn, hostile, fearful, aggressive, or they display a range of behaviours which can present challenges to foster carers. These children need stability and security in their lives to start the recovery process.

Break recruits and approves foster carers, living in Norfolk, and surrounding areas. Foster carers have emotional resilience, 'stick ability', and an enthusiasm to learn and develop in their role. They receive a high level of support and training.

Break's foster carers are professional and well thought of by children, young people, their families and other professionals. Our foster carers have high levels of self-awareness and are able to reflect on their practice as a foster carer. Foster carers are able to use the training they have undertaken and apply it to their fostering to create a therapeutic environment for the child or young person they care for. The basis of this therapeutic environment given by the foster carers is to build a trust with the child in the form of a secure base.

Break therapeutic fostering service incorporate into their recruitment, approval, support and supervision, and training, the need for foster carers to understand how children's early experiences impact on their development, needs and behaviours, and so empower the carers to feel confident in addressing these and knowing where to seek advice.

Break's staff and foster carers do all they can to safeguard all children and young people placed from all forms of abuse. Staff and carers are appropriately trained and follow relevant procedures.

All placements are planned and each young person has an individualised plan, which is reviewed regularly, throughout their placement.

Break oversees and supports any contact and/or reunification plans. Foster carers work in partnership with Break and the placing authority. This allows for young people's placements to be maintained over time, be successful and ensure the welfare and development of each placed young person.

Foster carers and staff are committed to Break's policy of anti-discriminatory practice. When making placements we match carers who are able to respect young people's culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, personal health, disability, religion and language.

Foster Carer Support within the Team

We recognise that the task of the foster carer can be very demanding – both physically and emotionally. We are guided by extensive research which highlights outcomes for placement stability and a therapeutic environment and the necessity for a tight, extensive wrap around support service for foster carers. For this reason Break's foster carers receive a high level of training and ongoing therapeutic support including fortnightly groups with the psychotherapist, and supervision and support from their supervising social worker. If the foster carers are to be able to provide for the needs of the young person then it is essential that they are supported by those working with the child, including social workers, teachers and therapist where everyone is part of the team. The foster carers are seen as the primary source of the therapeutic re-parenting process, and as such are respected members of the team. They also work closely with other foster carers doing a similar task. They record the child's progress and advocate for the child to ensure that that all who work with them understand and support the task they have.

Services provided to foster carers

- Foster carers receive the minimum of monthly professional supervisions (usually more) from a named qualified social worker, who has a low caseload and works flexibly to ensure maximum support at all times, including outside office hours via a team on-call system.
- Full time foster carers have short breaks (respite) at an agreed level, at the pace of the child, to allow themselves some short periods of time away from their caring responsibilities; however if

they are going away on a family holiday they are expected to bring the child or young person they care for with them.

- Specialist placement support is provided via the local Looked After and Adopted Children CAMH's team (Child and Adolescent Mental Health).
- Specialist support can also be accessed for the foster family and child by provisions with Break such as Life Story Work, Play Therapy, assessments etc.
- In addition to this Break foster carers are also provided with therapeutic supervision/consultation within a therapeutic support group once a fortnight from our psychotherapist who is a specialist in child and adolescent psychotherapy.
- Foster carers and the whole team form a cohesive group which is supportive and enabling.

Foster Panel

Break has a foster panel that meets the Fostering Regulations. Foster panel members have the necessary knowledge and expertise in relation to this specialised fostering service and receive appropriate training. The foster panel considers Fostering Assessments of potential foster carers, first annual reviews for foster carers and other reviews where there have been significant matters such as major changes in household, complaints or allegations. Foster panel has a quality assurance function, for the whole service.

Training and Professional development

- Break charity has a well established Learning and Development team which will deliver most of the training foster carers will need. Foster carers will often train alongside other social care staff both within and external to, the organisation. In addition, there is specific training identified for foster carers, bespoke to the fostering task.
- They receive training of a high standard from practitioners and trainers with specialised knowledge regarding young people who need a therapeutic placement. Nationally recognised training programmes will be delivered e.g. Diploma in Pedagogy and the Solihull training programme which carers are expected to achieve.
- Specialist training is delivered to cover all aspects of the fostering tasks, including any special interests for the foster carers.
- Break is always pleased to welcome the placement and supervision of students and AYSE workers in it's service. We offer a wide and enriching learning experience.
- Break Fostering social workers believe in the importance of the voice of the child. We aim to enable the child to feel empowered to communicate their thoughts and feelings.
- Days out for the foster carers and their young people (including the children of foster carers). This contributes to the support they feel, getting to know other foster carers and the social workers better, and building up a relationship with them and the children placed. These days out include activities, meals, gatherings etc and the main objective is their enjoyment and making them feel valued.

Quality Assurance

Break's Fostering service provides a service that achieves the highest standards in line with or exceeding the National Minimum Standards.

Policies, procedures and the Statement of Purpose are kept under continual review and if required are updated by the Registered Manager and the staff team at least annually.

The service is regularly audited by senior managers of the Break organisation and the foster panel. This will include our relationship with commissioners and delivering a service in line with their expectations.

Anti-discriminatory Practice

Break has a clear policy on Equality, Diversity and Anti-discrimination. Break Fostering believe that discrimination on the grounds of race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, gender or disability is unacceptable. The recruitment process of staff and foster carers, subsequent assessment of foster carers, and supervision all reflect the importance attributed to anti-discriminatory practice. The emphasis on anti-discriminatory practice is interwoven into all aspects of training and expected practice.

Before placement, which is planned, any individual needs of the child are taken into consideration and are matched with the carer. If there are specific needs, of any kind, this will be discussed and addressed.

Complaints, Representation and Allegations

Break's Fostering service has a full complaints and representation procedure. Break aims to resolve formal complaints within 7 working days of being reported. Allegations made about foster carers will be investigated rigorously in line with the relevant written procedures.

Finance

Break is a not for profit organisation. Any surplus it receives is put back into services for it's young people and families. Fees to local authorities are clearly set out, and any additional extra services not included can be negotiated when there is an assessed need for them. Payments to carers are always timely and include both a fee and an allowance to reflect the high quality of work they put into the task.

Professional Membership

- Fostering Network

We pay for membership to cover foster carers and their families for comprehensive legal protection, liability insurance, and advice, including a 24 hour helpline.

We encourage foster carers to make full use of the literature and services from Fostering Network.

- CoramBaaf

Provides leading research, literature, seminars and advice on all aspects of fostering.

- Momentum

Provides local courses and information for foster carers and young people in care.

- Ftse

Fostering Through Social Enterprise.

This is a forum for fostering providers who are not for profit. It looks at issues pertinent to fostering, practice issues, legislation, research, and is a forum for sharing good practice.