
Ascent Fostering Agency

Statement of purpose



Jan 2022

**ascent
fostering
agency**

A Therapeutic Fostering Agency

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the statement of purpose and function of the Ascent Fostering Agency Ltd (AFA) as an independent fostering agency.

The Ascent Fostering Statement of Purpose provides a range of information that is intended for a broad audience:

- **Looked After Children (LAC)**
- **Parents of Children**
- **Foster carers and prospective foster carers**
- **Ascent Fostering Staff**
- **Local authorities, health and social care trusts, who place children, or are considering placing with the agency**
- **Ofsted**
- **General public**

The Ascent Fostering statement of purpose meets:

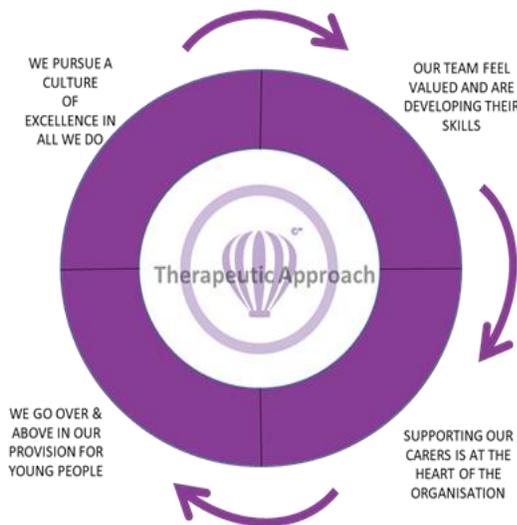
- **The Care Standards Act 2000**
- **The Fostering Services Regulations 2011**
- **The National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011**
- **The Children's Act 1989**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Data Protection Act 1998**

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed regularly, or at least annually by the Ascent Fostering Agency Management Team.

VALUES

Ascent Fostering Agency believes its core values sets it's apart from many other providers; our values are:

ASCENT FOSTERING: OUR VALUES MAKE US DIFFERENT



<p>OUR TEAM FEEL VALUED AND ARE DEVELOPING THEIR SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We invest in professional development of staff. - Our team understand the vision of the business - Everyone has a voice in the organisation - We create a fun place to work - We respect people as mature individuals and encourage work life balance 	<p>SUPPORTING OUR CARERS IS AT THE HEART OF THE ORGANISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We communicate clearly with Carers treating them as valued professionals. - Our carers all access an extensive monthly training programme - Carers have a voice and their feedback shapes decisions - The organisation support carers through promoting their wellbeing - We offer a strong financial support package to carers to allow them to focus on the children
<p>WE GO OVER & ABOVE IN OUR PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people are listened to and actions are taken' - Therapeutic Philosophy - All young people are offered access to a wide range of after school and holiday activities - All young people are offered a 1:1 mentor with a trained mentor. - We encourage therapeutic assessment for all young people with therapeutic support offered as appropriate. 	<p>WE PURSUE A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We measure ourselves against challenging targets - We challenge our approach to continuously improve. - We bring excellence into all areas of our communications with statutory partners, other agencies and the public. - We seek external verification from Panel and external partners to demonstrate the quality of our work to young people.

- WE GO OVER & ABOVE IN OUR PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- OUR TEAM FEEL VALUED AND ARE DEVELOPING THEIR SKILLS
- SUPPORTING OUR CARERS IS AT THE HEART OF THE ORGANISATION
- WE PURSUE A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO

Ascent Fostering challenges itself to live its values through engagement with young people, foster carers and staff. We reaffirm this with our commitment to supporting young people to recover from the impact of trauma.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Ascent Fostering is an independent fostering agency that has a therapeutic approach that supports children and young people who require foster care. The agency works with children and young people who have a range of complex care needs and offers bespoke care and support packages within a family setting. We achieve this by supporting families who care for young people creatively.

Our approach to foster care support is called 'Intentional Parenting,' this encapsulates all of our interventions and methods to support and engage with young people with high care needs. Our approach ensures the whole professional team at Ascent has a therapeutic understanding, and this includes support staff. Practically this means we are not wedded to any fixed point of view about placement support and have explored a myriad of approaches that have the most impact on children. We are committed to building a strong relationship with young people and accepting where they are at when coming to Ascent. This approach to seeing the world from a young person perspective informs how we engage and go on the journey with them.

We have trained all workers in DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy). All Supervising Social Workers (SSW), managers and mentors are DDP trained in Level one with SSW team completing Level two. The agency has run DDP's 'Nurturing Attachments' training for its first cohort of foster carers, which is an intensive 12-week course which embeds the approach and builds on attachment theory with the carer group. The Association for Psychodynamic Practice ^[L]_[SEP] and Counselling in Organisational Settings (APPCIOS) has now accredited the internal therapeutic course we use. Foster carers can gain credits towards further academic study. The agencies support staff and foster carer personal development.

Our ethos is to meet children at their 'map of the world'. Our foster carers intentionally parent children on their journey to recovery through intensive support and mentoring. We aim to build relationships with young people that are safe and supportive.

We engage with young people in many ways, including mentoring and personal development through our partner organisation Reaching Higher, who support young people through mentoring and access to creative arts, sport and music.

Intentional Parenting

Intentional Parenting is our model of how we support our children. We believe the onus is on adults to respond to the unmet needs of children positively. It is challenging to care for traumatised children, so the network needs to be trained, attuned and have the ability to see past the child's presenting behaviours.

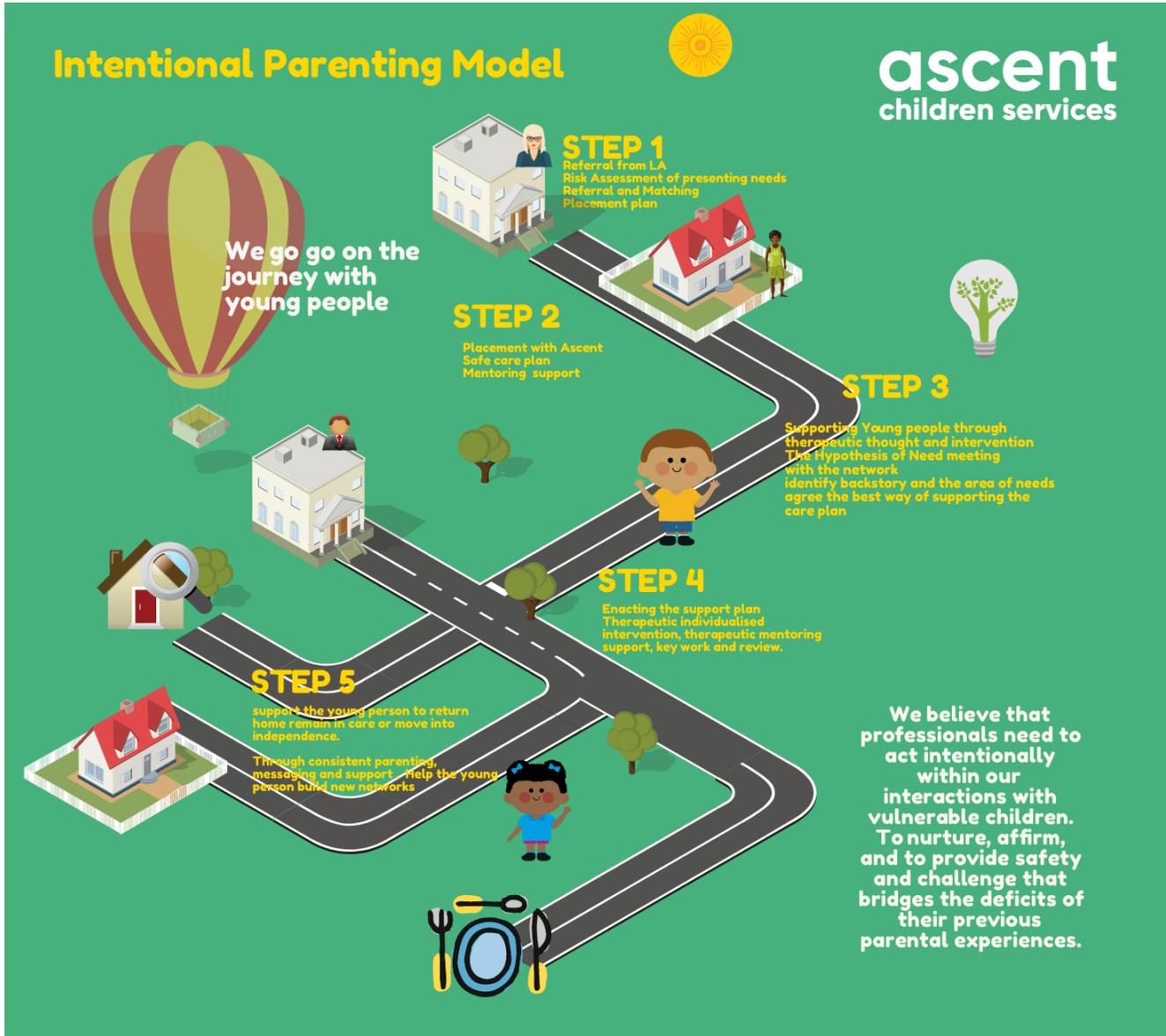
We believe that carers and professionals need to act intentionally in our interactions with vulnerable children by providing nurture, affirmation, love, safety, structure, and challenge. These interactions are attempts to meet the deficits of their previous parental experiences but most importantly give them strategies to cope and move on positively with their lives.

'I just wanted to jot down in a few lines how amazing J and N are as carers.

They took on three very difficult children, with a very difficult birth mother, and they weathered the storms for longer than anyone would have thought possible!' Head Teacher John Stainer School

We believe that no one theory meets the needs of human beings, so we have drawn upon and work within existing theoretical approaches such as attachment, systemic theory, and psychodynamic approaches. We

recognise the need to remain open and curious about methods or ideas in aiding us to respond to the individual needs of each child.



What is our Hypothesis of Need?

The Hypothesis is Need is a framework we have devised to understand a child's story and their experience of trauma and loss. We believe that exploring children's past, present and predicted their future outcomes give us the best indicators for understanding children's unmet needs. By having this understanding, we can devise a therapeutic plan and appropriate intervention and importantly, support for the foster carer: to best support the young person in a placement to move forward. Ensuring the impact of children's trauma is not lost on the network when we face into them.

HYPOTHESIS OF NEED

The Hypothesis of Need is a framework we have devised to understand a child's story and their experience of trauma and loss. By having this understanding, we can devise a therapeutic plan, appropriate intervention and importantly, support the residential team to best support the young person in a placement to move forward.

THE YOUNG PERSON

We believe by exploring children's past, present and predicted their future outcomes give us the best indicators for understanding children's unmet needs.



THE NETWORK

The network works with the same assumptions regarding the needs of the young person

FAMILY

The team better understand the child's family history family norms, and interactions



INFORMED STAFF

The team around the child is informed and curious about the young person history and trauma. The team can support the young person in an informed way

A THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT PLAN

The therapeutic plan is appropriate and supports the residential team to intervene and engage with the young person to help them heal from past traumas.



What does this look like for children and young people?

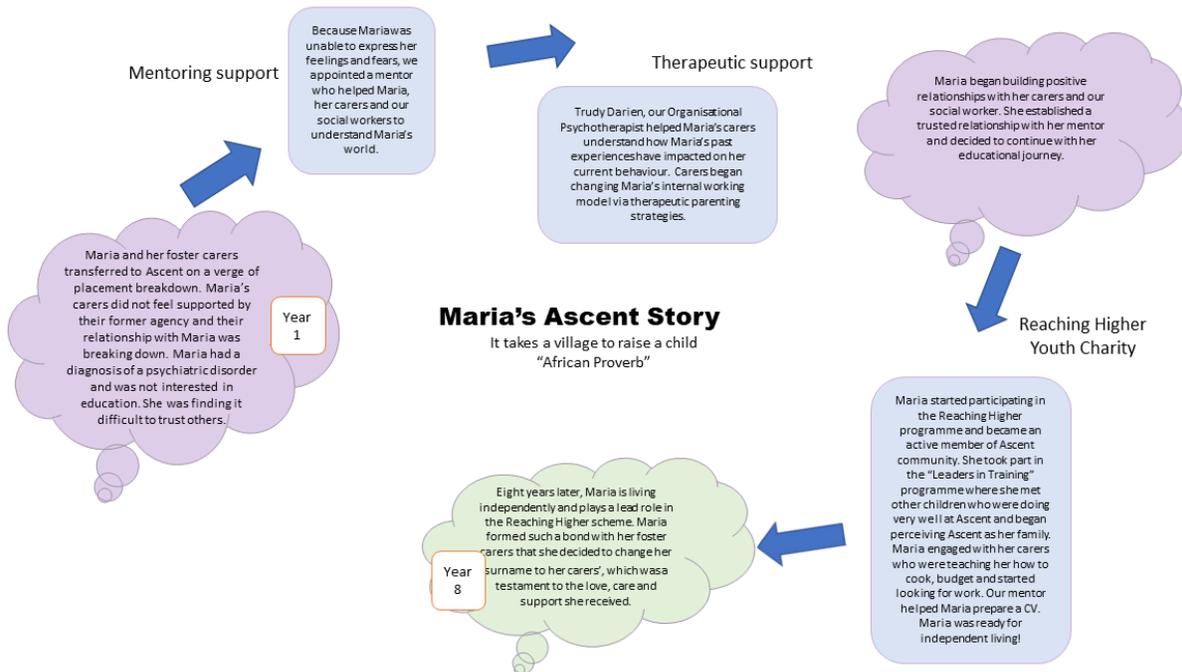
In real terms, it means that we provide foster carers with a genuine understanding of the young person's experience, not just words in a referral and challenging behaviours. The team (foster carers, SSW, mentor, child's social worker) reflect on the young person experiences before entering care, and we try to understand the impact and the hurt of this experience. We expect that foster carers care will provide warmth and safety and will journey with the young person while they test boundaries, revisit trauma, and challenge us to prove we care.

The task of the foster carer is to build trust and use PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) in our response, as most of this work takes place in their home and family. The foster carer will be supported via our therapeutic team to address some of the issues impacting the young person and their household. We offer the young person therapeutic mentoring sessions, which is often targeted around specific areas, i.e.

problem-solving, keeping themselves safe, managing anger, getting involved in groups or clubs. The young person can also access more structured therapeutic intervention to help them process trauma via our therapeutic child consultant. This work involves supporting the children as well as supporting foster families who live with the traumatised child.

Our SSWs ensure that the support plan and outcome for children and young people are enacted and liaise with local authority partners.

Maria's Case Study



Maria's case study highlights the support given to the young person who had a diagnosis of an attachment disorder when first placed. The consistent Parenting, support and therapeutic intervention had a positive impact on her. During this period, the foster carers were therapeutically trained and supported to meet her complex care needs. With help, they were able to stick with her on the journey to leaving care. Maria remains a vulnerable young adult but is networked in the

community and still has connections with the agency and strong links to her foster carers and our third sector partner Reaching higher.

Ascent Fostering will provide:

- **High-quality care for children and young people who are looked after in foster care.**
- **A commitment to supporting each child/young person as an individual with unique needs.**
- **24-hour support for foster carers and children/young people.**
- **A community-based service.**
- **A commitment to the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds.**
- **A consideration of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability of fostered children and young people when making placement and matching decisions.**
- **A commitment to the ongoing learning and development of foster carers, to support them in achieving the highest standards of care.**
- **A commitment to developing the skills to meet the most complex needs of children and young people.**
- **A commitment to the ongoing development of staff.**
- **Placements that are safe, nurturing, and protective, where children and young people are treated with respect and dignity.**
- **Children and young people will be encouraged, nurtured, and supported in a family setting where shared values are upheld, and their individual needs and differences respected.**
- **A commitment to managing risk proactively.**
- **An ongoing dialogue with the children and young people we care for, along with carers and the local authority about how we can improve our services.**

STATUS & CONDITIONS

Ascent Fostering, an Independent Fostering Provider (IFP), is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Number 08252409). In accordance with the Companies Acts 1985 and 1989, Ascent Fostering Agency Ltd has produced a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. Copies of the Memorandum of Association and Incorporation certificate have been made available to Ofsted, which is the independent, non-governmental regulatory authority for independent fostering agencies throughout England.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Ascent Fostering has a management team comprising of:

Mark Pomell, Dip S.W. M.A. management studies, Managing Director (Registered Manager)

Mark is a qualified social work manager and has a Masters in Management. He has over 30 years of experience in social care. Over the last 20 years, Mark has worked at a senior management level in both the statutory and private sector.

Mark Hobbs, Commercial Director (Registered Individual)

Qualifying as a Chartered Accountant with Ernst & Young in 2002, Mark has over a decade of experience in senior financial management, including senior roles at FTSE 100 companies. Mark has also spent over 17 years developing and leading youth work with young people. In 2010, Mark founded a youth charity called Reaching Higher, which has quickly grown into a thriving organisation delivering outstanding results in the community. Mark combines his passion for seeing young people thrive with his management experience to good effect at Ascent Fostering.

Zoya Byelovolova, Team Manager

Zoya has extensive and varied experiences of social work practice. Zoya has managed teams within the fostering sector and completed independent reviews and consultancy for various organisations.

Zoya is passionate about children's welfare and is interested in the impact of attachment and trauma, as well as the benefits of therapeutic fostering.

Sita Alexander is the Practice and Development Lead

Sita has a B.A. Honors in Sociology, Masters in Social Work, Diploma in Leadership and Management and has supported several students from different disciplines. Sita has worked across a number of voluntary, statutory and private settings including residential care, child protection, looked after children, education and prison. Sita has worked for Ascent for over five years, starting as a Supervising Social Worker and progressing into management. Sita has been part of the developing Ascent therapeutic model and the learning and development of both staff and foster carers.

The Ascent Fostering Management team is responsible for:

- **The organisation's vision and mission**
- **Quality Standards & Management Systems**
- **Fulfilling statutory duties and responsibilities**
- **The values to be promoted throughout Ascent Fostering**
- **The strategic direction and goals of the organisation**
- **The organisation's policies**
- **The annual business & development plan**
- **Major financial expenditure decisions**

The organisation has separate documents which detail the qualifications and experience of staff. These documents are available on request.

STAFFING

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- Ascent Fostering has a board of 2 Executive Directors, Mark Hobbs and Mark Pomell.
 - In post is a Team Manager FT, 3 F.T. Supervising Social workers, 0.5 supervising social worker, 1 F.T. administrator, 1 P.T. administrator, 2 F.T. Therapeutic support workers.
 - 24 hrs of contracted therapeutic hours per week (therapeutic child-care practitioner)
 - Additionally, Ascent contracts hours with an occupational health consultant as required.
 - Additional independent assessment and reviewing officer support.
 - Qualified sessional social workers are commissioned to undertake Coram BAAF Form F assessments and present them to panel. Formal qualifications and C.V.s of all sessional social workers are available on request.

Concerning all staff, we expect:

- Supervising Social Workers are qualified registered with Social Work England.
- The agency has appropriate insurances; staff have job descriptions, contracts of employment, annual appraisals and are appropriately DBS checked.
- Managers and staff members receive supervision and appraisal in accordance with their role and responsibilities.

Role and Responsibilities

The Team Manager is responsible for the supervision and management of SSWs. In Ascent Fostering, the Team Manager is responsible for the day to day function of the organisation. Quality assurance function is an integral part of this role; they ensure that Ascent is compliant and will oversee monitoring.

Supervising Social Workers (SSWs)

The SSWs have responsibility for the assessment, support, supervision, and annual review of foster carers. Also, they work in close partnership with the Looked After Children's Social Worker and will attend Looked After Reviews and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings with the foster carer to ensure the very best outcomes are achieved for children placed with our carers. SSWs are responsible for monitoring the continuous professional development and training of foster carers. They ensure that all foster carers complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) and maintain an ongoing portfolio; working closely with the Learning and Development team to facilitate this. Also, SSWs co-ordinate and deliver support groups for foster carers and provide the frontline delivery of Out of Hours Services to carers. The Support Workers offer specific support services and mentoring to both foster carers and children and young people, and have experience of working with children in a variety of settings.

Ascent SSWs are DDP (Dyadic Developmental Practice) trained and also engaged in Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) training. Furthermore, Ascent has its therapeutic programme that all workers complete. Our commitment to this level of professional training means we can offer therapeutic solutions and strategies to children with the most complex needs.

Therapeutic Fostering support workers

At Ascent Fostering, our therapeutic support workers support placements by engaging with young people act as mentors, and advocates to help young people find practical ways of solving the challenge they face in their lives. Input is time-limited, and solution focussed on enabling those supported to achieve personal growth and development.

FOSTERING PANEL

Ascent Fostering has a fostering panel, comprising of members with relevant child-care and statutory social work experience. This includes a care leaver, substance misuse worker, social workers, teachers and a connections worker. The panel chair and minute takers have undertaken Corum/BAAF training.

Ascent Fostering panel and staff members are recruited per "safer recruitment" guidelines.

Ascent Fostering must consult the Fostering Panel in considering the approval of foster carers, and in drawing up and reviewing fostering arrangements. The panel must consider:

- Each application for approval as a foster carer and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer,
- Where it recommends approval of an applicant, the terms on which approval is to be given,
- Whether or not to recommend a foster carer's ongoing suitability to continue acting as a foster carer and whether or not their terms of approval remain appropriate:
- On the first review within 12 months of initial approval,
- On the occasion of any other review when requested to do so by Ascent Fostering.
- A foster carer's suitability to continue acting as a foster carer following investigations into allegations of serious concerns about a foster carer's standards of care, and to make recommendations on further support and training needed, in keeping Ascent Fostering's Managing Serious Concerns policy.

The Fostering Panel also advises on the reviewing procedures and monitors this effectiveness. They also oversee the conduct of assessments and make recommendations on such matters or cases as the fostering service may refer to it. The Ascent Fostering Panel can only make recommendations as it is the Agency Decision Maker who makes a formal decision. This process takes seven working days.

It is Ascent Fostering policy that:

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- All foster carers attend the fostering panel for their approval and first annual review.
 - All foster carers subsequently return for their three-yearly review.

RECRUITING, APPROVING, TRAINING, SUPPORTING AND REVIEWING FOSTER CARERS ASSESSMENT AND APPROVALS:

Ascent Fostering assesses the suitability of individuals or families to foster; we seek people who have a good enough understanding of children in the care system. They must demonstrate a wiliness to learn and develop new skills if they wish to foster for Ascent.

In general, the assessment process takes up to 4 months. The steps to foster with Ascent are:

- **Initial enquiry** - On receiving an enquiry from a potential foster carer(s), Ascent Fostering requests basic information to satisfy that the enquirer is capable of fulfilling the organisation's requirements to provide safe and nurturing families. If satisfied, Ascent Fostering literature and an application pack are sent to the enquirer.
- **Initial assessment** - the management team will consider the information, if appropriate, arrange an initial visit. The initial visit report is presented to the recruitment manager; following this, and a decision is made whether or not to proceed.
- **Application to Foster - (stage 1)** The potential foster carer(s) complete(s) an application form, giving detailed information about them and their family and gives consent for Ascent Fostering to complete necessary checks and enquiries to ascertain their suitability to foster. **Full Assessment - Stage 2.** If the decision is made to proceed, a qualified social worker carries out a Form

F1 assessment. They will visit the applicant(s) home, generally on 6-8 occasions, to meet and collect information about all members of the household and the applicant's experience and skills concerning fostering.

- **Preparation training (Skills to Foster) is provided which covers the responsibilities of being a foster carer and working with Ascent Fostering. All prospective foster carers must attend this training before their approval.**
- **Statutory checks form part of the assessment (stage1/2) and include :**
 - **Disclosure and Barring Checks is completed on all adult members of the family and all regular visitors to the household. These involve the disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions and other information which may be held by Police or Government agencies relevant to the protection of children.**
 - **Enquiries to: Social Services Departments and their Child Protection Registers.**
 - **Other agencies, e.g., Schools, Employer (where appropriate)**
 - **Medical - The applicant(s) is/are required to have a medical examination completed by their G.P., and the report is made available to Ascent Fostering's Medical Adviser for recommendation about the applicant(s) health and any impact on fostering potential.**
 - **Personal and relevant work references**
- **All information obtained on prospective foster carers is held on file. References from external agencies (Police, Social Services, Medical) and personal references cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referee(s).**
- **Assessment report - The information obtained forms the basis of an assessment report. Ascent Fostering uses the Form F1 format published by**

the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). The content of the Form F assessment report is shared with the applicant(s).

- **Fostering Panel** - The report is presented to the Fostering Panel. The panel makes recommendations about the suitability of applicant(s) to be approved as (a) foster carer(s) with Ascent Fostering Agency. To assist in the decision-making process, applicants are required to attend the Fostering Panel.
- **Approval decision** - The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendation of the Fostering Panel, and on behalf of the agency makes the final decision about approval/appointment. Applicants are informed verbally and in writing about the organisation's decision.

SUPPORT

Ascent Fostering Agency values the work foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people they look after. Support for families who foster is vital to successful outcomes for children. We ensure our families receive additional help and support through training, access to a mentor, and therapeutic advice.

We recognise that fostering is stressful, so it is vital to provide a flexible and responsive support service to our foster carers. By arranging a Hypothesis of Need and devising a support plan when children are 'matched' this reassures families when they take on the care of children with complex needs. Ascent Fostering offers the following support and services to all our foster carers, children and young people

Social work and therapeutic support:

- **24-hour support**
- **Supervision and support from a Supervising Social Worker**
- **A comprehensive training programme**

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- A minimum of weekly contact and monthly visits by a Supervising Social Worker
 - Therapeutic training level 1&2
 - Nurturing Attachments training
 - Consultation groups
 - Monthly meetings with other foster carers for mutual peer support and friendship
 - Membership to the Foster talk and Corum/BAAF
 - Consultation groups chaired by a Therapeutic support worker
 - Annual programme of activities involving all of the foster family

Therapeutic support

Ascent Fostering uses a therapeutic model to support foster carers, and this includes actively training fostering carers to understand the 'inner working model' of children and PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) parenting.

When we use the term therapeutic, we mean a 'specialised' service for foster families: it is a way of caring for children that supports them heal and the carer go alongside them on their journey. We achieve this by offering planned therapeutic help and support over some time.

The focus of the work is to recognise and acknowledge the unmet needs of the child or young person and to understand and address the impact of traumatic early experience on children (for example; serious loss, neglect, abuse or extreme attachment difficulties). Such experiences are likely to have had severe consequences for the child's capacity to be parented or cared for, to make friends, trust, or be part of the group, to learn and be taught and just respond appropriately to everyday life experiences. These difficulties are unlikely to improve without intensive and skilled therapeutic support on a 24-hour-a-day basis.

At Ascent Fostering, we provide therapeutic support for the foster carers in several ways. This is to help them understand the complexities and equip them with skills

and techniques for working with children and young people who have experienced trauma. We also provide an extensive training programme which includes a four-day training course in therapeutic care and communication for children. This course is facilitated by our therapeutic consultant, Trudy Darien, who has an M.A. in Therapeutic Childcare and over 25 years of experience working in residential and therapeutic communities. Our training course has been accredited via the Association for Psychodynamic Practice and Counselling in Organisational Settings (APPCIOS).

Additionally, we provide weekly therapeutic support for those young people who have attachment difficulties and have experienced trauma in their early years. While some young people may have access to CAMHS, we find that many are often reluctant to engage, for fear of being labelled or misunderstood. Our Therapeutic consultant will meet young people at their map of the world. By this, we mean that young people will decide how and where they would like to engage in the process.

Financial Support:

- A competitive level of financial support that values the skills of foster carer(s) and meets the overall needs of the child/young persons placed.
- Three weeks paid respite per year.
- Holiday Allowance for the young people in placement.

Support services available to children and young people:

- In association with Reaching Higher, a children's charity, children and young people within the Ascent network can access a range of supports, clubs and residential camps, including:
 - Personal mentoring,
 - Weekly Clubs including football academy, creative arts – dance, drama, music and film-making,
 - Physical, Social, Health & Education (PSHE) workshops on bullying, managing conflict, budgeting and leadership skills,
 - Support with regards to CSE,

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- **Therapy & Counselling,**
 - **Annual leisure activities, including outing and trips.**

These services ensure that foster carers are fully supported and that young people's placement outcomes are successful. We expect people who foster for Ascent to be resilient and opening to their learning and development.

TRAINING

We recognise that fostering has become increasingly more demanding, complex and diverse. Ascent Fostering is committed to providing high-quality training and mentoring for carers.

The delivery of and attendance at training is inherent to good quality child care and is an essential element of our support to foster carers. It assists in the agency's ability to support good outcomes for children.

Attendance at training encourages foster carers to take responsibility for their professional development and learning. Ascent Fostering is committed to supporting foster carers to receive formal qualifications and will support carers to achieve where possible. All carers will complete the TSD standards for foster carer within the first 12 months of approval.

The over-riding objective of our training programme is to support carers to develop specialist and therapeutic knowledge and skills that cater for the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people with high-end complex needs and challenging behaviours.

Ascent's foster carers having the opportunity to:

- **Complete therapeutic training,**
- **Develop their understanding of their role and responsibilities, improve their knowledge, and develop and refine their skills as substitute parents,**

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- Raise their awareness of the psycho-social backgrounds, resulting in vulnerabilities, and therapeutic needs of looked-after children/ young people,
 - Encourage foster carers to reflect and understand the effects of discrimination in all forms and parts of the community,
 - Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and safeguarding children.

The Training Programme is created to address the learning needs of all carers at every stage of their fostering career. The training programme has four stages which include:

- Preparation and Induction training for applicants in assessment
- Foundational training, mandatory for newly approved carers in the first year of approval.
- Core training on a range of developmental, and general fostering issues available to all carers.
- Advance training for more experienced carers.

The core training programme will consist of:

- Therapeutic Child Care level 1 (4-day course)
- TSD workshops (6 days)
- First Aid
- Promoting Diversity
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Safer Caring
- Serious Concerns & Allegations
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Promoting good outcomes
- Record Keeping

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- Therapeutic fostering levels 1 & 2 accredited through APPCIOS
 - Nurturing Attachment training (12 weeks course)
 - Sensory Attachment Intervention training

INSURANCE

Ascent Fostering has the appropriate insurance, which includes:

- Employer's liability up to £10,000,000
- Public liability up to £10,000,000
- Business contents/interruption

Each fostering household is expected to have appropriate household insurance, and if they driver, have fully comprehensive insurance on vehicles used to transport young people.

MEMBERSHIPS

Ascent Fostering Agency is a full member of Corum/BAAF. All foster carers will have full membership with the following organisations:

- Foster talk which includes legal cover.

REVIEWING

At Ascent Fostering, we have a procedure for the completion of foster carer annual review. This procedure reflects the legislation, regulations, National Minimum Standards 2011 and good practice. Annual reviews are chaired by Independent professionals who offer the agency feedback.

In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, Ascent Fostering Agency will bring forward annual reviews in the event of significant changes in the foster household or other serious events i.e. following a serious complaint or incident. In the process of conducting carer's reviews:

- Looked-after-children and birth children views of the foster home are sought.
- We seek professional feedback from the looked after child's social worker.
- An appraisal of carer's training and development needs is undertaken.
- Following a recommendation from the fostering panel, the Agency Decision Makes makes the final for a decision on the carer's ongoing suitability to foster.

It is the agency's policy:

- That all foster carers are reviewed annually by the agency's designated reviewing officer.
- All of the foster carer's annual reviews are presented to the fostering panel.
- All foster carers attend the panel for their first annual review and third annual review and every three years thereafter.

SERVICE PROVISION

Our placement options cover all eventualities from emergency to long term fostering.

Placement Types:

- Short Term
- Long-term
- Emergency
- Assessment
- Bridging
- Respite & Holiday

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- **Parent & Child**
 - **Solo placement**
 - **Teenage specialist placements**
 - **Transition into independence**
 - **Sibling Groups**
 - **Step down placements from residential**

PLACEMENT REGULATION

All placements of children and young people with Ascent foster carers are made and monitored per the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and meet the national minimum standards. This means that:

- **All foster carers are appropriately approved, reviewed and have signed a Foster Care Agreement,**
- **All children's placements are made using individual foster placement agreements,**
- **Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken; including introductions to the foster carers.**

CONSULTATION

We are currently surveying all young people to gauge their sense of happiness in placement. We will report in June 2020.

COMPLAINTS

The Ascent Fostering complaints procedure places emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level:

Stage 1

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- **Informal problem solving by the SSW and line manager**
 - **Records of investigations and outcomes of complaints resolved informally are held on file for inspection by Ofsted and/or other regulatory bodies.**
 - **All children/young people placed with Ascent foster carers are informed of the organisation's complaints procedure via a Children's/Young Person's Guide'. Children receive complaints cards with the contact details of the registered individual and Manager to report if they have any concerns.**
 - **All foster carers, staff and children's/young people's placing authorities are given information about Ascent Fostering's complaints procedures.**

Stage 2

- **Complaints are those where resolution at Stage 1 has not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke Stage 2 of the procedure direct. Complaints of this nature are dealt with by the Fostering Services Manager; and if appropriate independent consultants are appointed to carry out formal investigations.**

Stage 3

- **The Ascent Fostering's Representations and Complaints procedure has scope for a complainant, if dissatisfied by the response in Stage 2, to request that the matter be referred to the Services Provider**

ACTUAL COMPLAINTS & OUTCOMES:

Details of any future complaints and their outcomes will be filed confidentially and be made available for Ofsted.

Ascent Fostering Agency is committed to providing excellent care of children. If you have any questions about Ascent or would like to know more, please contact us on enquiries@ascentfostering.com

