



# ATRIUM FOSTER CARE

## Statement of Purpose

### ~June 2024 ~



**Children & young people are at the heart of everything we do**

#### **Registered Office:**

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## About us

Atrium Foster Care is an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and registered under the Companies Act 2006 (company number 14683557).

Our Head Office:

**Gill House,  
140 Holyhead Road,  
Birmingham  
B21 0AF**

## Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate statute law and regulations. Examples include:

- The Children Act 1989 and Volume 4 2011 (fostering services)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 updated 2013
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England) 2011
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000

A copy of the Statement of Purpose will be made available to any person working for the fostering service, children and young people in our care, their parents, local authorities, prospective and current foster parents, social care establishments and any other person or company who would like to know more about our service. This Statement of Purpose is also available for perusal on our website.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and agreed annually by the Registered Manager and Senior Management Team.

## Our Mission, Aims and Objectives

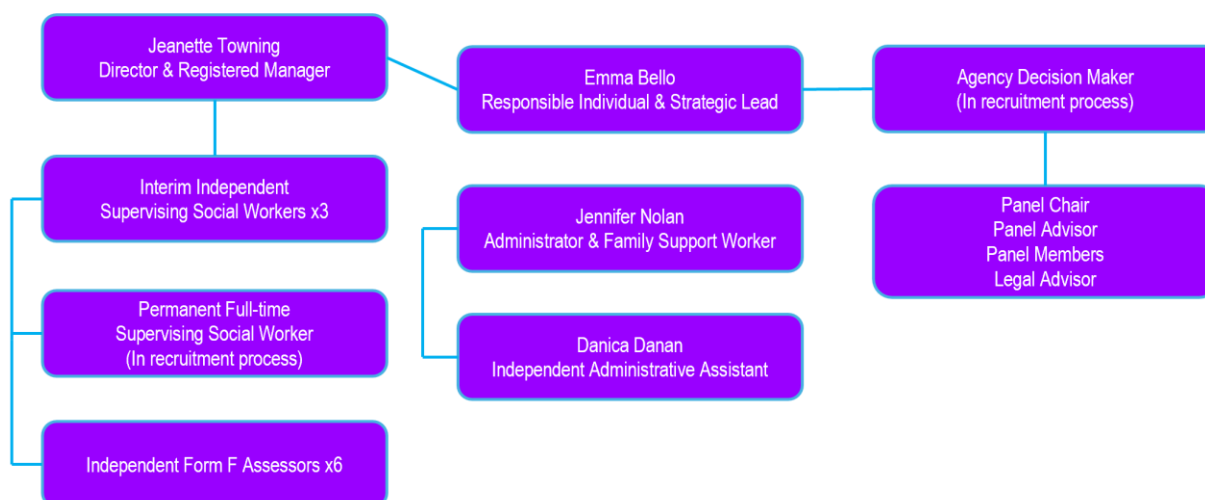
Atrium Foster Care's mission is to provide a high-quality, humanistic approach to operating our fostering service. We aim to provide the children and young people in our care a stable, supportive and therapeutic home and family, and to support their foster families to provide the best opportunities and care to the children that are afforded homes at Atrium Foster Care.

Our aim is to transform the lives of children and young people placed with our foster parents; enabling them to overcome any loss or trauma that they may have experienced. Whilst, aiding each child/young person to form secure attachments, build resilience, realise their unique potential and flourish whilst in our care.

Our objectives are to:

- Provide stable, loving and supportive foster homes for Children in Care.
- Recruit, train and retain foster parents from diverse backgrounds; ensuring a range of appropriate foster homes are available for children and young people.
- Support, supervise and provide accessible training to parents so that they are able to meet the individual needs of the children and young people matched.
- Carefully match the needs of children and young people with suitable foster parents.
- Ascertain the wishes and feelings of a child or young person, to promote participation and ensure they have a say in their care plan.
- Seek to maximise a child/young person's outcomes in all areas of their development.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to remain with their siblings and promote family time with the birth family and significant others whilst at Atrium and to facilitate this contact as per their care plan.
- Promote diversity and equality within the service and to recognise the importance of a child's ethnic origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background; and to consider fully a child's gender, sexuality and any disability they may have.
- Consult with children and young people and foster parents. Ensure their views are listened to and considered in services and future planning.
- Support and encourage a culture of continuous review and improvement and where applicable accessing external professionals and research to inform practice.
- Adopt a positive culture which will reward and celebrate the good work of our staff, foster parents and children/young people in our care.

## Atrium Foster Care's Organisational Structure



Atrium Foster Care has in place a Leadership Framework that is reviewed and updated with this Statement of Purpose. It sets out our commitment to leading the agency within a flatline organisational structure and with a joint-working ethos where we operate with an open-door policy to the leadership team for all staff, foster parents and independents. The Framework identifies our external, independent Critical Partners who will hold the leadership team to account for setting its vision and fulfilling its mission.



Jeanette Towing;  
Director & Registered Manager

Jeanette has substantial experience of strategic and operational work within children's social care, managing both children's residential homes and fostering services for nearly 30 years.

Jeanette has a unique perspective into the world of fostering; experiencing it as a teenager from a care perspective, managing fostering services and being part of a family that fosters.

Jeanette's extensive portfolio of professional qualifications include nursery nursing, education, management and social care and health. In addition to this, Jeanette maintains her professional development by regularly attending training, specialising in attachment theory, trauma informed practice and therapeutic parenting. Jeanette also delivers a broad range of training to foster parents and staff in respect to therapeutic parenting and other topics to support understanding and meeting the needs of children in our care.

Jeanette lives in Northamptonshire with her husband, two grown up children, and two dogs. As a family, they have fostered teenagers over the past twelve years, which further supports Jeanette's understanding of delivering a quality fostering service.



Emma Bello  
Responsible Individual, Strategic Lead

Emma has 9 years' experience of working in the independent fostering sector and for the last five years at a senior management level. Emma has worked for a large, national fostering agency, a small local agency and now for Atrium Foster Care at its inception. An example of her previous experience has been assisting the Director of acute mental health services, in the NHS, and her specialisms are project management, change management and business development. Whilst the Registered Manager, Agency Decision Maker and social work team ensure the provision of a high-quality social work service, Emma maintains a quality assurance overview of the compliance of this practice but also ensures that the agency sets and delivers good, sound business targets in line with the objectives outlined in

this Statement of Purpose. Emma maintains the balance in her leadership approach by being mentored by the UK Director of a very successful international business and also by a retired Head of Service of Children's Services.

Emma's personal ambition in her professional development is to complete her MBA and is currently working towards her Level 5 in Leadership and Management. She is trained in DDP Level 1 and PACE and shares the Directors' vision of developing a therapeutic agency where everyone works within the agency's therapeutic model. Whilst safeguarding children is Emma's ultimate concern her other passion is being an employee champion, recognising that any organisation's greatest asset is their staff team. With the Directors and Registered Manager, Emma seeks to ensure that the very best talent is attracted to working with Atrium and that they are retained through a host of benefits and attending to their wellbeing in line with our therapeutic approach. A retained, stabilised, engaged, professionally developing workforce is particularly important as they build relationships with children and families and model resilience, family values and the commitment families make to each other.

The team are supported by Jennifer Nolan who is employed part-time by Atrium and provides administrative support and some bespoke family support to children and families. They are also supported by Danica Dannan who was a student volunteer for the agency for a 20 week placement and stayed on in the capacity as a self-employed social media manager and also provides administrative support.

At this point in our growth, the agency are in the process of recruiting a full-time, permanent Supervising Social Worker and an Agency Decision-Maker. In the meantime, Jeanette is supported by independent social workers who provide supervision of families. The agency is very well-supported by its Central List of qualified and highly-skilled professionals.

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

Atrium Foster Care is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children who are placed in our care, so that they can experience a healthy and fulfilling childhood that is safe, positive and free from harassment and bullying. At Atrium Foster Care we recognise that we have both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care to all children in placement and this moral and legal obligation extends to our employees, foster parents and the communities within which we exist.

The "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" guidance promotes that children are protected from harm and that everyone has a responsibility to commit to this. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a responsibility and a role to play in safeguarding children. The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as the following:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances

At Atrium Foster Care standards of practice, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection are shared and communicated to all practitioners and foster parents working with the children and their families. To ensure that the promotion of safeguarding and child protection remains our core focus we are committed to:

- Offering regular training to all foster parents, staff and independent practitioners



- A quality assurance programme that is monitored and evaluated by the management team and forms part of the foster Panel role
- A culture of equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and respected
- Listening to and gathering children's views, independent of their foster parents
- Transparent lines of communication and systems
- Safer recruitment process that is overseen by the registered manager, directors and office manager
- Implementation of safe caring that is a set agenda for supervision with foster parents and supervising social workers (SSW) and is part of our training programme
- Internet safety, children missing from care and sexual exploitation as a key focus within everyday practice, training and forums
- Atrium Foster Care remaining current and up to date with new legislation, regulations, standards and national and local guidance
- Working in partnership with placing local authorities to ensure that the agency is working in line with their protocols and procedures
- Working in partnership with local safeguarding boards.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

### **Committed to Equality, valuing Diversity and promoting Inclusion**

At Atrium Foster Care, we strive to create an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and celebrated. We aspire to be a reflection of the communities we serve and seek to ensure no child or young person; applicant, parent or employee is treated unfairly on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, religion, identity or any other protected characteristics. We recognise and value individual differences and contributions and believe in aiming to achieve equality for all.

## Service Provision

Atrium Foster Care, seeks to offer the following foster homes:

### **Emergency**

This is commonly known as same day care (within 24 hours). Atrium Foster Care will accommodate 24/7, all year-round emergency requests.

### **Short Break**

Short Break care offers families, children and young people a break from complex family dynamics. Well planned breaks may prevent disruptions or problems becoming too difficult to manage in the future. To support foster parents short breaks will be offered to our own foster parent, and where possible this will be provided by a known, designated foster parent, or a relative or friend associated with the fostering family.

### **Short-term**

Short term can last a few days, weeks or months. A child or young person placed may be awaiting a more permanent home with a long-term foster family, adoption, move back with birth parents or move to assigned Guardians.

### **Long-term**

This is where a child or young person is expected to remain in care until independence (usually 18 years). Atrium Foster Care will offer permanent homes for children and young people, where either adoption or rehabilitation to family is not an option.

### **Solo**

Atrium Foster Care will provide care for children and young people whose needs require a higher level of support and supervision, which precludes a child being matched alongside another child.

### **Staying-Put arrangements**

A Staying Put Arrangement enables young people to remain in their foster home post 18 to support their transition into adulthood. Atrium Foster Care will provide support to the foster parent(s) in accommodating such requests.

### **Other options offer fostering experience to:**

- Individual children
- Sibling groups
- Children with additional needs
- Parent & child
- Unaccompanied children

## **Recruitment and Approval of Foster Parents**

Atrium Foster Care is committed to recruiting a diverse range of foster parents who can provide high quality care for looked after children. We have an on-going programme of recruitment using word of mouth, social media platforms, Atrium's website, the internet, local advertisements, attendance at local recruitment events etc.

Enquiries and applications to foster are welcomed from people regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. We aim to recruit foster parents who share our ethos and demonstrate the key skills needed to holistically meet the needs of looked after young people.

During the assessment process prospective applicants will be required to complete Skills to Foster training. In addition to this, we offer 'My Family Foster's' and invite birth children to attend an information workshop to prepare them for being part of a family that fosters. Assessments on prospective foster parents are carried out in accordance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

Following completion of the fostering assessment, applicants are invited to attend a Fostering Panel with their assessor. The Fostering Panel, drawn from a Central List, (and shared with Atrium Foster Care) of members, provides a quality assurance function independent of the agency in respect of the assessment and review of parents, and may comment upon policy and development issues. Panel and central list of membership includes a balance of gender, age, ethnicity, and experience.

Applicants are informed following their attendance at Panel of the recommendation and the final decision is made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Applicants are notified within ten working days. If the applicants are unhappy with the decision, they have a right to appeal. This can be made directly to the agency or through an Independent Review Mechanisms

## **Review of Foster Parents**

In compliance with the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, all foster parents and their approval status is reviewed at least annually. The review determines whether approval of the parent should continue and / or whether there should be any changes made to their continued approval status. If significant changes take place before

this review, Atrium Foster Care will hold an additional review meeting. Some of the examples below are the reasons why a meeting would be required before the scheduled review:

- Serious concerns or allegations made relating to a parent's practice.
- A breakdown in the relationship between the approved foster parents, with one parent no longer residing at the approved household.
- Foster parents or agency require an emergency change of approval.
- Serious illness or death of an approved foster parent.
- When the parents lifestyle has significantly changed, which has started to impact the parents fostering role/s
- Atrium Foster Care having significant concerns that the fostering household is not working in partnership with the agency.

Prior to a Panel review taking place, Atrium foster parents Supervising Social Worker will prepare a full report and obtain feedback from placing agencies, linked social workers, foster parents, children and young people, education staff and any other professional involved in the child's or young person's care.

The review also provides an opportunity for foster parents to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. The review recommendation made by the Panel will be presented to the ADM. The parent will then receive confirmation of the ADM decision re: their re-approval in writing a few days later.

## Training for Foster Parents

At Atrium Foster Care we provide an extensive range of training opportunities to benefit and develop our parents'. Our aim is to equip foster parents with the most effective tools possible to support and empower children and young people in their care. The protection and welfare of all children/young people placed with our foster parents is paramount and our training programme seeks to reflect this principle.

All foster parents are required to complete "Preparing to Foster" training and are expected to complete their TSD standards within their first year following approval.

For newly approved parents, core training is required to be completed within the first year of initial approval and then to attend an update on core training every three years, enabling all parents to keep up to date with relevant key changes to practice, policies and guidelines.

Part of the mandatory training will involve training on trauma informed practice, to understand issues such as attachment styles, and models of working with children including the Secure Base Model, PACE and therapeutic parenting techniques.

It is our intention at Atrium to provide opportunity for foster parents to develop their understanding further of therapeutic models and approaches and offer nurturing attachments accredited Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) training.

Atrium Foster Care is committed to provide bespoke courses, specific to the foster parent's skills, development needs and practice interests, or relating to the particular needs of any child/young person in placement.

Atrium Foster Care's training courses are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they include the most up to date research, practice and legislative changes.



Post Panel, successful applicants will join a team of other foster families, where they will be supervised, supported and advised continually by a Supervising Social Worker (SSW).

Families will be frequently contacted by telephone and visited by their SSW. At least twice yearly, every foster family will receive unannounced visits as part of the safeguarding and quality assurance process ensuring the continued quality and suitability of the fostering household and the well-being of children living with them.

Atrium Foster Care will be committed to promoting foster parents participation in the above, in order to improve our service provision.

### **Support Out of Hours**

A qualified social worker will provide personal, local support 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year to our foster parents. Out of Hours support will also include a manager for additional advice and guidance.

### **Peer Support Group meetings**

All foster parents will have access to a foster parent peer support group, which will be scheduled six times yearly. Foster parents will be encouraged to attend, as support groups provide a level of peer support, encourage peer to peer learning and offer a platform enabling parents to raise and discuss topics of interest.

In addition to this, there will be opportunity to meet with staff and other foster parents at a twice-yearly Forum. These gatherings will give opportunity for foster parents to discuss any issues with staff face to face and allow information to be shared with foster parents directly. March is a provisional date for the first Forum of the year as it is an opportunity to share details from the Regulation 35 report and discuss views on end of financial year considerations for foster parents payments in line with a review of the payment policy for foster parents.

### **Parent Mentors**

Atrium Foster Care will seek to match in-experienced, newly approved foster parents with experienced foster parents. This provides additional support for a foster parent as they learn to navigate their way through fostering roles and responsibilities.

### **Parent Champions**

Experienced foster parents or those that have additional skills around social work, education, therapeutic work, will have the opportunity to become Champion Parents' and share their knowledge and expertise with other foster parents.

### **Membership to Foster Talk**

Atrium Foster Care will provide membership to the Foster Talk for every fostering household registered with the agency. Foster Talk provides independent support and advice for foster parents, including those facing allegations and complaints.

Further benefits of the Fostering Network's membership include:

- Legal expenses insurance cover
- 24-hour legal assistance
- Allegations support
- Accountancy advice
- Medical advice
- Counselling helpline
- Education Advisory Service

## Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality control measures and procedures are implemented to ensure that the service is operated in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, National Minimum Standards 2011 and the Children Act 1989. Examples of QA processes include: regular supervision, carrying out quality assurance audits of our processes/practice areas, obtaining wishes and feelings of children placed in our care, gaining feedback from stakeholders to improve our service provision etc.

The Registered Manager monitors in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 6 and the notification stipulations of Schedule 7. Safeguarding matters are a key priority, and the Registered Manager has lead responsibility.

## Services for Children and Young People

Services available for children and young people include:

- Child's Advocate available to them at the time of arriving into the care of their Atrium family where they can access independent support if required
- Supervised family time
- 'Atrium Kids' and 'Atrium Young People's Club', opportunity for peers to come together for activities and discussions at least four times yearly.
- Access to national organisations for 'looked after' children and young people
- Support to access full health and education services
- Bespoke written materials
- Individual and group work
- Holiday activities and outings, and extra curricular activities
- Leaving care advice information and support
- Therapeutic Support Plans for children, and 1-1 support from a Support Worker or other supporting professional if required.
- Education support and assistance via school SENCOs and virtual schools, preparing staff and parents to engage with schools in planning to meet the needs of children and young people in their care.

Atrium Foster Care will/aim to:

- Set aspirations for children and young people, and celebrate every step towards them.
- Maximise opportunities for children and young people to fulfil their potential to achieve.
- Share understanding of the impact of past experience and learnt behaviour on children, coping strategies and the mental health of children and young people, with the team around the child or young person.
- Be agile to provide additional support, calling in independent services where required, to aid stability via the live Therapeutic Support Plans.
- Advocate for children's and young people's rights and access to appropriate support and intervention.

Atrium Foster Care have a close working relationship with Starlight Child Care Services which is a supportive provision offering overnight short-breaks, daycare and emergency call-outs to support the de-escalation of disruptions. Foster parents are reassured that this provision is part of their support package they receive when a child comes into their care. This reassurance

extends to children's social workers who know that Atrium have good strategies in place to manage instability and disruptions should they arise.

Foster parent supervision addresses the dimensions of care provided to children and young people, ensures the best interests of children and young people are safeguarded and promoted, that their views and wishes are understood and represented, and identifies further appropriate services to promote their physical, mental and emotional welfare.

## Complaints Management

Atrium Foster Care has a clearly defined 'Complaints, Comments and Compliments' and 'Whistleblowing' process that is accessible to children and young people and their families, foster parents, staff, Central List members, independent assessors, local authorities, and other independent persons commissioned to contribute to our service. Complaints are monitored, treated respectfully, efficiently, and dealt with in accordance with our policy. Where applicable, a resolution is sought as early in the process, seeking to avoid unnecessary escalations where possible. Atrium Foster Care, when necessary, will access an independent person to oversee/ review a complaint and all stakeholders are made aware of who to contact to whistleblow against a member of the leadership team.

## Our Policies

Atrium Foster Care has a robust set of policies and procedures in place that are compliant with the legal framework; namely, (but not exclusively), the [Fostering Services Regulations 2011](#) and [Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011](#).

These fostering policies and procedures are written in line with Atrium's ethos, values and therapeutic model and are concerned with:

- The recruitment, assessment, retention, valuing and support of foster parents.
- The recruitment, retention, valuing, supervision and professional development of employees and independent practitioners.
- The matching of children and young people into foster homes
- Safeguarding children and achieving the very best outcomes for them via our therapeutic parenting approach.

During their Induction program, all foster parents, employees and independent practitioners agree to adhere to practice in accordance with Atrium's policies and procedures and this is monitored through the supervision process. Policies are reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are any changes to legislation, and any changes are communicated to all stakeholders.

Any policies, including the complaints, behavioural management, safeguarding procedures; along with the statement and purpose will be made available on request, to the registered manager, in hard or electronic copy. The Statement of Purpose along with the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy will also be made available on Atrium Foster Care's website.

## Essential Contact Details

### Atrium Foster Care

Registered Manager and Safeguarding Designated Officer

#### Jeanette Towing

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### Atrium Foster Care

Responsible Individual & Complaints Officer

#### Emma Bello

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