



Statement of Purpose 2022-23

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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Standards Act 2000;
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011;
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, 2011 (updated 2013)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011

The statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation 3, includes:

- Statement of the Aims and Objectives of Outset fostering services;
- Statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

A copy of this Statement of Purpose is available on our website and copies will be made available, upon request, to:

- Any person working for Outset Fostering Agency
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer
- Any child or young person placed with Outset

- The parent/person with parental responsibility for a child or young person placed with Outset

This Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by Outset Fostering Agency's Management Team whenever there is a change, and at least annually.

Following the outbreak and the on-going covid 19 pandemic, adjustments to service delivery have been made to ensure we continue to provide the best service to all children and families while not placing the families or staff at any additional risk.

Name and Address of Responsible Individual:

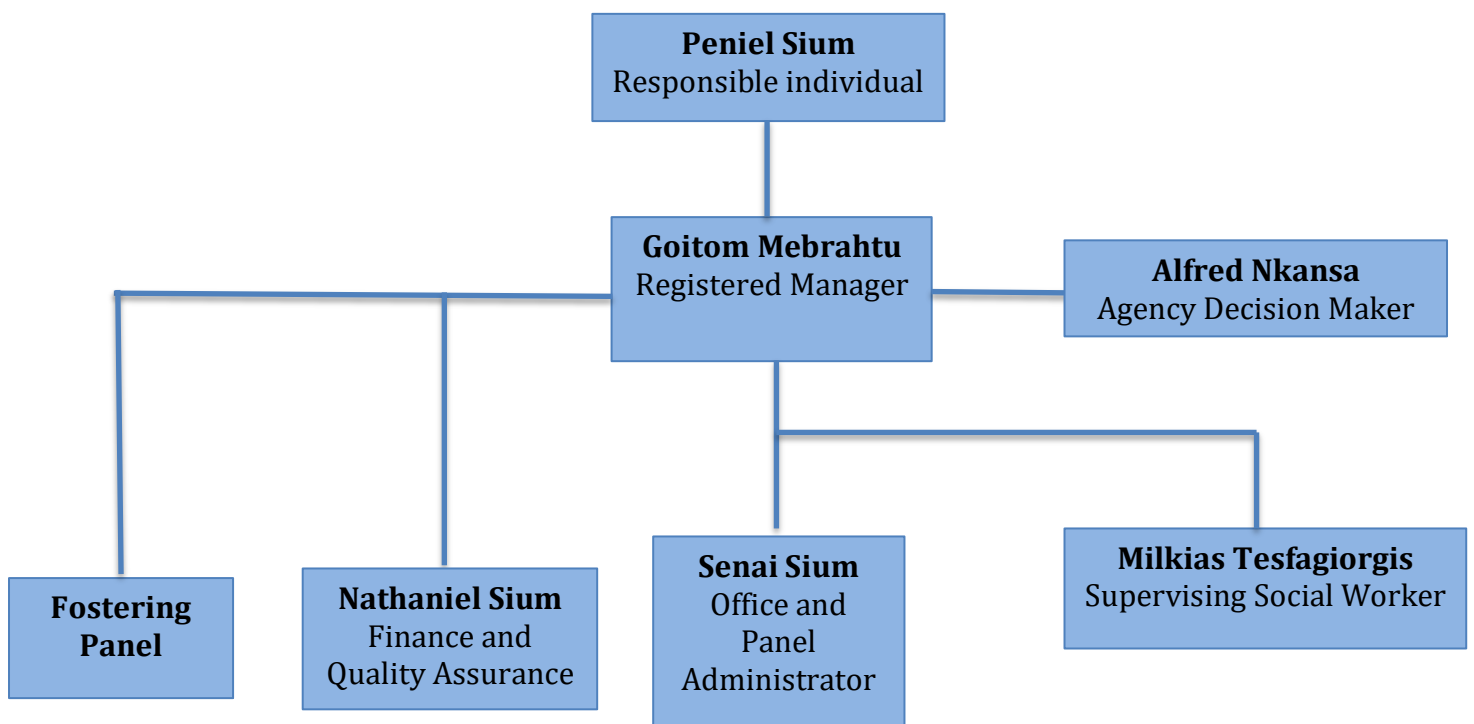
**Peniel Sium
Responsible individual
Outset Fostering Agency
Vision 25, Innova Park
Electric Avenue
London
EN3 7GD**

About Outset Fostering

Outset is an Independent Fostering Agency that provides a range of fostering placements to meet the needs of looked after children. Outset was set up by a team of Social Workers and Foster carers to provide an innovative, high quality alternative to existing independent fostering service providers.

The organisation is managed by a team of experienced, qualified professionals who provide a needs led service to children and young people in foster care.

Organisational Structure



Aims & Objectives

The centre of Outset's focus is always the child or young person in our care. In agreement with the Children Act 1989 we subscribe to the view that a child is best brought up in their own home with both parents playing a full part in their upbringing. Where this is not possible, Outset Fostering Agency aims to place children and young people with an alternative family that is committed to providing a positive and nurturing environment.

In pursuit of its stated aims and objectives Outset will employ policies, practices and procedures which seek at all times:

- To provide stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to feel safe and secure.
- To recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds with a variety of skills and experiences, in order to offer a wide range of placements for children and young people and ensure there is genuine choice and opportunity for good matching.
- To provide 24/7 support to foster carers and children/young people.
- To protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.
- To place children/young people at the centre of the fostering process and promote their best interests, in accordance with the care plan.
- To value diversity and promote equality by fully recognising, respecting and promoting the racial, faith, cultural and linguistic background; and to consider fully a child's gender, sexuality and any disability they may have and take

these into account when making placement matches.

- To provide a service which implements and consistently exceeds national minimum standards.
- To organise and manage the agency's resources effectively to ensure the best possible service delivery and the safety of children/young people.

Achieving for Children

Outset Fostering recognises that we work with some of the most vulnerable members of society, and our focus is always the child or young person in our care.

Outset uses the five key outcomes areas of "Every Child Matters" to guide the care provided by our foster carers:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Achieve economic wellbeing
- Make a positive contribution

Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

We seek to recruit, train and support professional, resilient carers that provide young people with an environment which allows them to live happy, fulfilling lives and achieve their full potential. The recruitment and retention of these dedicated carers is fundamental to our success.

Recruitment

The skills required of foster carers are varied and wide-ranging; the agency recruits individuals and families from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Some of the selection

criteria we look at when recruiting are as follows:

- Previous employment in children's services- Paid or unpaid
- Applicants who show a willingness to work towards meeting care standards for fostering
- Applicants with experience of previous fostering and/or close involvement with someone who has already fostered
- An ability to see beyond children's behaviour, and to link it to past trauma, where applicable
- An empathy for and natural ability to nurture children traumatised by separation from their birth families
- Applicants able to accept teenagers
- Applicants comfortable with parents visiting their home

Prospective carers must evidence their capacity to meet the holistic needs of any child placed.

Application process

The Outset Fostering website provides potential foster carers with information to help them make informed choices about fostering for this agency. Enquiries can be made online or by telephone. If the enquiry is positive an initial home visit will be arranged.

Initial visits

Initial visits are undertaken by a local qualified Social Worker in the prospective carer's home. During the visit, potential applicants will be given further information about fostering including the roles and responsibilities of the Agency staff and the assessment process itself. The social worker will discuss the prospective carers

skills and motivation as well as practical requirements to foster.

If this initial visit is positive, an application form can be completed.

Preparation training

Applicants will be invited to attend a Skills to Foster preparation course along with other applicants. Experienced social workers and foster carers lead the course.

The assessment process

Outset Fostering carries out rigorous assessments of prospective foster carers using a competencies approach and the CoramBAAF Form F report. All assessments are conducted by qualified, registered Social Workers in accordance with the Fostering Regulations 2011 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (miscellaneous amendments) Regulations 2013.

The assessment process consists of a series of in depth interviews, which cover the candidate's childhood and background, educational and life experiences, values and attitudes.

The Outset Fostering assessing social worker will undertake the assessment in the following settings:

- During the Skills to Foster preparation course
- The applicant's own home
- In other relevant settings e.g. a relevant workplace

All candidates must:

- Complete a standard application form, providing comprehensive details about themselves and members of their household
- Agree to undertake a medical with their GP, the results of which are viewed by our medical advisor prior to making a recommendation regarding fitness to foster
- Give agreement for the required statutory checks to be undertaken
- Provide the names of three referees, each of whom will be visited by the assessing social worker as well as ex-partner's where applicable and a reference from the school for birth children if attending school
- Give their agreement to an employer's reference being sought by the agency
- Provide details of all children/adult children, of the applicants who will need to be interviewed through the assessment

Approval

Following satisfactory clearance in relation to all the statutory good practice all completed assessments are presented to an independent Panel, which plays a significant role in the agency's Quality Assurance process. The panel makes recommendations to the agency regarding the suitability of the applicant to be a foster carer. The Agency decision maker considers the recommendations before notifying the applicants in writing. Should the agency not recommend approval, the applicant will be written to outlining reasons for this decision and will invite them to submit written representation within 28 days of the notice or to request a review by an independent review panel through the Independent Review Mechanism. The

applicant will receive further information regarding the independent review mechanism and their right to appeal.

All successful applicants and Outset will sign a written agreement (the Foster Care Agreement) that sets out the terms and conditions of the fostering household's relationship with Outset.

Foster carers are provided with a comprehensive fostering handbook, which contains information and procedures in all aspects of fostering tasks. This handbook is updated regularly and is also available online.

Equality and Diversity

Outset Fostering is fully committed to ensuring that the services we provide are relevant to the needs of all sections of the community and that our workforce represents the people we serve. This means equality in all areas of it's service and all opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation ("the protected characteristics").

We aim to create environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, carers and suppliers are treated with respect. Training is mandatory for all staff and carers to assist them to understand and value diversity. We want all the children and young people in our placements, our foster carers and employees to feel valued and treated equally and fairly.

Services offered by Outset Fostering Agency

Outset's services are provided within the framework of fostering legislation, guidance and best practice. We aim to not only implement but also exceed the national minimum standards of foster care.

Outset can provide a wide range of placement options and services for children and young people of all ages. We find the closest possible match and identify any additional training, support or resource required.

The types of placements we offer include:

Emergency Placements

These are placements provided at short notice, including out of hours.

Short-term placements

These can provide care for a few days, weeks or months while plans are being made for the child's long-term future.

Respite placements

These are placements where foster carers provide a break for parents and additional support where their own support networks are lacking, or can be provided to other foster carers as a way of supporting complex needs placements. This can be an overnight stay or a couple of weeks.

Long-term placements

These are where foster carers provide continuing care for a child up to and into adult independence.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers

These are placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Outset Fostering has a pool of foster carers from diverse backgrounds who support young people with immigration; religious, language and cultural needs as well as integration with community and faith groups.

Sibling placements

These are placements where siblings are either placed together or separately with us facilitating contact between siblings.

Parent and child

These placements provide a safe and supportive family based environment where parenting skills are able to be modelled, observed and assessed in line with the placement agreement.

Outset works to provide Local Authorities with a fee structure that is clear and effective, without compromising the service provided to the children and young people placed with us.

Solo Placements

These are placements for children and young people who are unable to be placed alongside other children due to their very complex needs and/or challenging behaviour

Matching

On receipt of a referral from a local authority, we work to provide the best match for every child and young person who needs a family based placement.

In consultation with experienced social work staff, we put forward available foster carers as a proposed match based on:

- The child's individual matching requirements including cultural need and wishes
- Their experience, knowledge and skills
- Their location and the distance from the foster home to the child's school and community

- The foster carer's own children and other family members
- Any other children in the placement

Finance

In accordance with NMS 2011 Standard 28 Foster Carers will receive an allowance in order to provide for all of the practical needs for a Looked After Child. The financial remuneration offered to agency carers reflects the demands of the task and quality of service carers are expected to offer. Out of their fee, carers are expected to meet the routine cost of looking after a child. Further details are available on request and are always included with the foster carer's agreement.

Foster Carers will be advised that the allowance has to cater for all of the children / and young people's needs and they must budget with the allowance so as to be able to cover larger expenses e.g. the purchase of a laptop. Where carers feel that a particular need cannot be met by the allowance, carers are asked to address this with their supervising Social Worker.

Foster Carers are entitled to a mileage allowance barring the first 20 miles of each journey, and individual membership to Fostering Network. Detailed financial information and guidance will be supplied to Foster Carers within their Foster Carer Handbook and a detailed annual statement will be provided at the end of each financial year.

All Foster Carers are self-employed and as such must ensure they pay their own Tax and National Insurance. Further financial information and guidance on finances is supplied to Foster Carers during their induction.

Participation and Consultation

Outset Fostering is committed to ensuring the involvement of service users, carers and staff to ensure that quality standards achieve on-going and sustainable improvement through continues review.

We hold multiple events yearly for children and carers to give them the opportunity to tell us about the services we provide. Their feedback is welcomed and used to improve the service.

Complaints and Representation

Outset Fostering Agency has a complaints procedure in place to speedily respond to all complaints and representations. We recommend that any complaint made by a Foster Carer should first be discussed with their Supervising Social Worker. If the complaint is not resolved then a meeting will be arranged between the Foster Carer and the Team Manager to resolve any concerns.

If the foster carer is still not satisfied we will then recommend that a formal process be instigated with the complaint being put forward in writing to the Registered manager for investigation:

Goitom Mebrahtu
Registered Manager
Outset Fostering Agency LTD
Vision 25, Innova Park,
Electric Avenue,
London,
EN3 7GD

It is important for us to know when service users feel we are doing a good job. Compliments are as important as complaints in ensuring we continue to learn and improve. The easiest way to make your views known is to send a note or e-mail to the Registered Manager outlining

where you have benefitted from a service or the efforts of a member of staff.

320 City Road
London
EC1V 2NZ
T: 020 7833 5792

Ofsted

Any foster carer or a child/young person may choose to contact our regulator, Ofsted, directly regarding any complaint/allegation concerning the standard of service provided by a foster carer, or about the management of our service. Outset Fostering Agency will co-operate fully with any investigation conducted by Ofsted.

www.voiceyp.org
E: info@voiceyp.org

Ofsted National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
Fax 0300 123 3159

Other Essential Addresses and Contact details

Children's Commissioner

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner
Office of Children's Commissioner for
England
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

T: 020 7783 8330
E: Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
i.gov.uk
Freephone for children and young people
T: 0800 5288330

Voice

Voice is a national children's charity that empowers children and young people in care and in need and campaigns for change to improve their lives.