

Statement of Purpose



Orchard Care (North East) Limited

Non-profit Independent Fostering Agency

May 2023

This statement of purpose provides all the information required in The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

This Statement of Purpose relates to:

Orchard Care (North East) Limited
Suite 1 Alexander House
Whitfield Court
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Durham
DH7 8XL

Tel: 0191 378 4444
Email: info@orchardcare.org.uk
Website: www.orchardcare.org.uk



Passionate about fostering

north east
england

CONTENTS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
1	Introduction	3
2	Mission Statement	3
3	Narrative	3
4	Aims and Objectives of the Fostering Service	4
5	Status & Constitution	5
6	Services & Facilities Provided	5
7	Recruitment & Approval System for Foster Carers, Volunteers & Staff	8
8	Educational Support, Training & Reviewing	9
9	Management & Staffing Structure	10
10	Number of Foster Carers	16
11	Number of foster children/young people placed	16
12	Foster Panel	16
13	Agency Decision Maker	16
14	Independent Reviewing Officer	16
15	Complaints & Outcomes	17

1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been written in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulations 3 (1) of the Fostering Regulations 2011. It sets out the Statement of Purpose for Orchard Care (North East) Ltd and relates to the company's operations as an Independent Fostering Provider.

The Orchard Care Statement of Purpose is designed for a wide readership including:

- Children and young people who are placed with our foster carers
- The company's staff
- Foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Local Authorities who place, or are considering placing with Orchard Care North East Ltd
- Colleagues from other social care agencies
- Health and educational establishments
- The General Public

The Orchard Care North East Ltd Statement of Purpose aims to meet, and where possible, exceed the requirements arising from:

- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Director, and more frequently as necessary by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.

2. Mission Statement

To offer children with complex needs and contexts the opportunity to live happily in a family setting.

3. Narrative

At Orchard Care our thinking and doing are guided by the idea that everything we do is linked to supporting children with their identity or "story" and the development of life skills and independence.

Orchard Care exists as the response to the challenges of the care system and what are often its failings. By following and studying the success, (combined with decades of practical wisdom and experience), Orchard Care is concerned with applying practical wisdom to transform lives for the good.

The ingredients for success are not mysterious and yet most of the system struggles to deliver what, we as humans, know are basic needs for children. We know that in order for children to respond and be able to function in the world, they need both to be safe and to be nourished.

In our work this notion of safety is a complex one. For us, the adults in general, it is simple, we have moved them to a place of safety they should feel okay, shouldn't they? But often they don't. This special understanding of how children feel inside is a key ingredient to our approach and how success is achieved. By really thinking about the impact of attachments that are in some way abusive or harming rather than supportive and nurturing, we can begin to enter into the child's world and from that position, guide our intervention.

At Orchard Care, emphasis is placed on essentials of warmth, shelter, food, clothing, human contact, concern, and interest. We offer an expression of our humanity as a base line for how we believe care should be. In this way, through time, our children can learn that there are certain things which are measures of healthy relationships and basic rights in life. We do not tell our children you should live like this not that, rather we treat each other and them in particular, with a human quality, which we believe is instantly recognisable to all. This mixture of compassion and recognition that we are all the same is a key part of our approach.

In order to guide the work and interventions designed to support each individual child, the organisation has had to structure itself in its staffing, its policies, and procedures and in it doing of the business of our work in very particular ways. The thinking that underpins these ways can be best described as a systemic way of working that is adaptable into individual circumstances. So, for example, whilst we would say that everything at Orchard Care is attachment based, how we show this to individual carers and children will have considered their particular context. This relational thinking and the responsibility for making good relational connections are key skills in the conscious minds of the practitioners and carers at Orchard Care.

Constantly, we ask ourselves “so how would I cope if this was happening to me?” The answer sometimes is overwhelming and challenging and this links to another main part of practice at Orchard Care, which is the caring of the adults, the staff, and the carers. Children are, of course, our entire reason for being, assisting them and taking responsibility for the harm and horror that they have had to endure is what we are all about, but the focus of the work is on the health and wellbeing of the adults looking after them. What the staff and professional team need to do is to both help carers know that they are okay and that they can help children and stay in that healthy place. This thinking is, in terms of current organisational life, showing itself most clearly in the development of practical and clinical supervision (group and individual) rather than a single supervisory process.

The concept of adult attachment is very much at work here and has been from the outset. So, the idea of availability, of scaffolding, of effectiveness and of confidence are modelled throughout. The work is the creation of contexts that enables trust to grow healthily as part of the healing process.

The responsibility for the care of the children we look after is immense, the most vulnerable in our society, they have been abused, often multiple times and then, as they often describe, they feel like parcels with little sense of belonging. There is a shocking lack of understanding about how logical and sensible the responses of children to the harm they have received actually are. What we work at here is containment, processing and narrating as a path to healing.

4. Aims and Objectives of the Fostering Service

Introduction

Orchard Care is a well-established organisation with a proven record in providing successful foster homes for children and young people.

Orchard Care is run on a 'not for profit' basis. This means that all the money is put back into the organisation for the good of the children and young people, and to maintain very high standards of care and increase service provision.

We achieve the best possible care and outcomes because the organisation is run by people who are dedicated to helping children, young people, and the foster carers with whom the young people live.

All the staff from Admin, Support, Social Workers, Teaching staff to Senior Managers understand the need to support foster carers and is their main task. By working very closely together we aim to give the best possible care to the children and young people we look after. This also enables all foster carers to draw on the many decades of childcare experience within the organisation.

Aims and Objectives

To keep children safe from harm and promote wellbeing and happiness.

To recruit, train and support carers with the space, time, and desire to help children and young people who present as complex (including sibling groups).

To recruit, train and continuously develop the staff team and associates to support carers to achieve stability and positive outcomes for young people.

To achieve stability for all our young people both in childhood and in transition to adulthood.

To have 100% of our children and young people accessing full time education using highly developed systems for inclusion, monitoring of attainment and building aspiration.

To support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the whole organisation, particularly our young people with a range of therapies/approaches/fun and interest.

To support our teenagers into work or work experience (an extension of life skills and education).

To create, develop and nurture working together, partnerships and alliances which support and enable our aims and objectives.

5. Status and Constitution

Orchard Care is a Limited Company, Limited by Guarantee, providing placements for children and young people aged 0 – 17 years.

The sole Director is Maria Jones.

6. Services & Facilities Provided

Core Services

Our service offers care for children and young people of any age, typically 0-17 years as defined by government legislation and funding. However, our ethos extends to caring for those who need it most, and often that isn't just defined by what money is available for whom.

We offer various types of Placements (regardless of ability, impairment, or status):

Long Term Care: Often permanent, long-term care is the preferred type of care for young people when it is certain they cannot return to live with their birth family. The stability and consistency of long-term placements generally leads to better outcomes for young people in the care system.

Short Term Care: Temporary placements such as these are different to emergency care in that they are usually subject to detailed advance planning as well as being lengthier and more stable. Often a few weeks or months in duration, short term care is provided when a young person may be returning to their birth family, moving to a long-term fostering placement, or arrangements to find an adoptive family are underway.

Short-Break Care: Sometimes young people need a change of scenery and carers need time to themselves. To ensure healthy relationships last, short-break care arrangements can be set up. This is where a secondary set of carers will temporarily care for a child outside their normal placement.

Emergency Care: These placements are available when a young person needs somewhere safe to stay immediately. They are planned at very short notice and can last from a few hours to a few nights while a long-term plan is constructed.

Other Services

Out of Hours: Our extensive Out-of-Hour's service ensures that there is always a qualified and registered social worker or manager at the end of our phone 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

Support Groups: Carer Support Group:

Carers meet up together once per month. This is an opportunity for networking and getting help and support from each other. It is most valuable when similar experiences are shared.

Children Who Foster Group:

Birth children of carers are given the opportunity to meet up and share their experiences from time to time.

Life Story Work: Life Story Work, and its significance, is taught as part of our core training programme for staff and foster carers. To firmly ground this theory in practice and really make the thinking useful, Talking with Children groups have been set up to develop the skills and abilities to empower young people to communicate effectively.

Who our Core Services are here to serve.

At Orchard Care, our main focus is on specialist care, providing 'capable and equipped' homes and support packages to enable any young person to get the most out of their life. Our specialist care includes:

Children with Disabilities

We have many profoundly disabled children in our care and have developed caring, long-term placements and sustainable ways of supporting families who care for them. We have foster carers skilled and equipped to look after children with learning and physical disabilities. Furthermore, we have a number of foster homes that are adapted for wheelchair access.

Independent Living/ Transition into Adulthood

This is an exciting stage of life for many young people. Sometimes 18 can't come fast enough for young people in the care system, and sometimes it comes all too soon. At Orchard Care we work with young people in our care to access the support they will need in their later teen years, whether it be staying at home post-18 and learning how to become an adult or developing the skills to move out and gain independence.

Children with Challenging Behaviour

We often work with young people who, as a result of their challenging behaviour, are likely to be institutionalised in a residential setting. We believe that many young people in these environments do not need to be there, and we therefore work closely with these young people to create a different future.

Ethnic Minority Groups

There is a large shortage of carers who can support a child from an ethnic background or from a religious background different to their own. We are fortunate to have met many wonderful people who think nothing of working across religions and backgrounds, as well as having many carers from different faiths and countries across the world.

Care for a Large Sibling Group

Sometimes children thrive better when they can be with their siblings or some of their family. However, each child in care generally requires their own room, so when a group of five children need housing, how many homes can cater for them? We know that there are people with large houses who like fostering; it's just a question of finding them. We offer quality support to these carers to enable them to undertake their roles effectively, ensuring that large sibling groups receive the nurturing they require.

Parent & Child Placements

We provide placements to parents of any age, gender and need. We are experienced in undertaking assessments of the parent's ability to conduct their parenting safely and effectively. We offer practical advice and support on all aspects of parenting and child development.

Children with Autism

Like families with children, severe autistic behaviours can be under a lot of strain due to the care and attention required to support their needs, education, and development. We have a large number of staff on our team who have specialist skills in working with children and young people with autism, and our education facilities have heralded many success stories.

Palliative Care

We believe that all young people, who are ill or dying and do not need to be in hospital, should be in a restful and loving home. However, we understand that many families may not be able to deal with this responsibility. We are therefore able to provide specialist carers who can provide round the clock nursing, as well as offering emotional support to the family.

Quiet Room

This room is somewhere for young people, carers, mentoring foster carers, prospective foster carers, or staff to go when they need a little peace and quiet to work or work things out.

Life Story Room

This room is somewhere for young people, carers, and staff to go when they are doing Life Story work. The room is set up with the necessary equipment and stationery to facilitate this important work.

Playroom

This is a space for children and young people to unwind and have some fun with a book, toy, game, or computer.

Contact Facilities

This room is for birth families and children and young people in our care to come and share some time with them and engage in the best way possible.

Talking with Children Facilities

This is a special area that facilitates and promotes the development of skills that enhance our understanding of what young people are trying to tell us.

Kitchen

This has been designed for independent living skills workshops (with disabled access).

Disabled Toilets

We have 2 Disabled toilets.

Office Space

Our office space accommodates our Managers, Senior Social Work Practitioners, Supervising Social Workers, Support Workers, Teachers, and Admin team.

7. Recruitment & Approval Process for Foster Carers, Volunteers & Staff

Orchard Care takes all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children.

When interviewing potential staff, we will ensure:

- There is an open recruitment process.
- There is a rigorous interview.
- Applicants' identity and claims to any academic or vocational qualifications will be verified.
- References will be taken up by direct contact with referees.
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the potential employee will be sought.
- Where appropriate an enhanced disclosure via the Disclosure Barring Service will be secured

Where a position requires an enhanced disclosure, this will be clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post. All applicants will complete an application form enabling each of them to have the same opportunity to provide information about themselves and assist in identifying any gaps in their employment history.

During interviews the interview panel will explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children and young people
- His or her ability to support the organisations agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee.

In addition, the full range of statutory checks will also be undertaken.

A job offer will only be made subject to the necessary checks being satisfactory.

All staff will have a job description and contract of employment and be required to work a probationary period.

8. Support for Foster Carers

Aim

We offer support, both practical and emotional, in order to increase stability for all our young people and their carers.

At Orchard Care the entire staff team are sensitive to the need for thoughtful and flexible support for carers and young people. Sometimes support is very planned, e.g., assisting a carer in getting a child or young person to health appointments or it may be unplanned when a carer is ill or otherwise temporarily requiring assistance.

Awesome Club

The staff team and a foster carer support a group of young people to run a small club to practice having fun with other young people and learn skills like cooking and organising.

The club regularly gets involved in supporting different local charities and they love to help others!

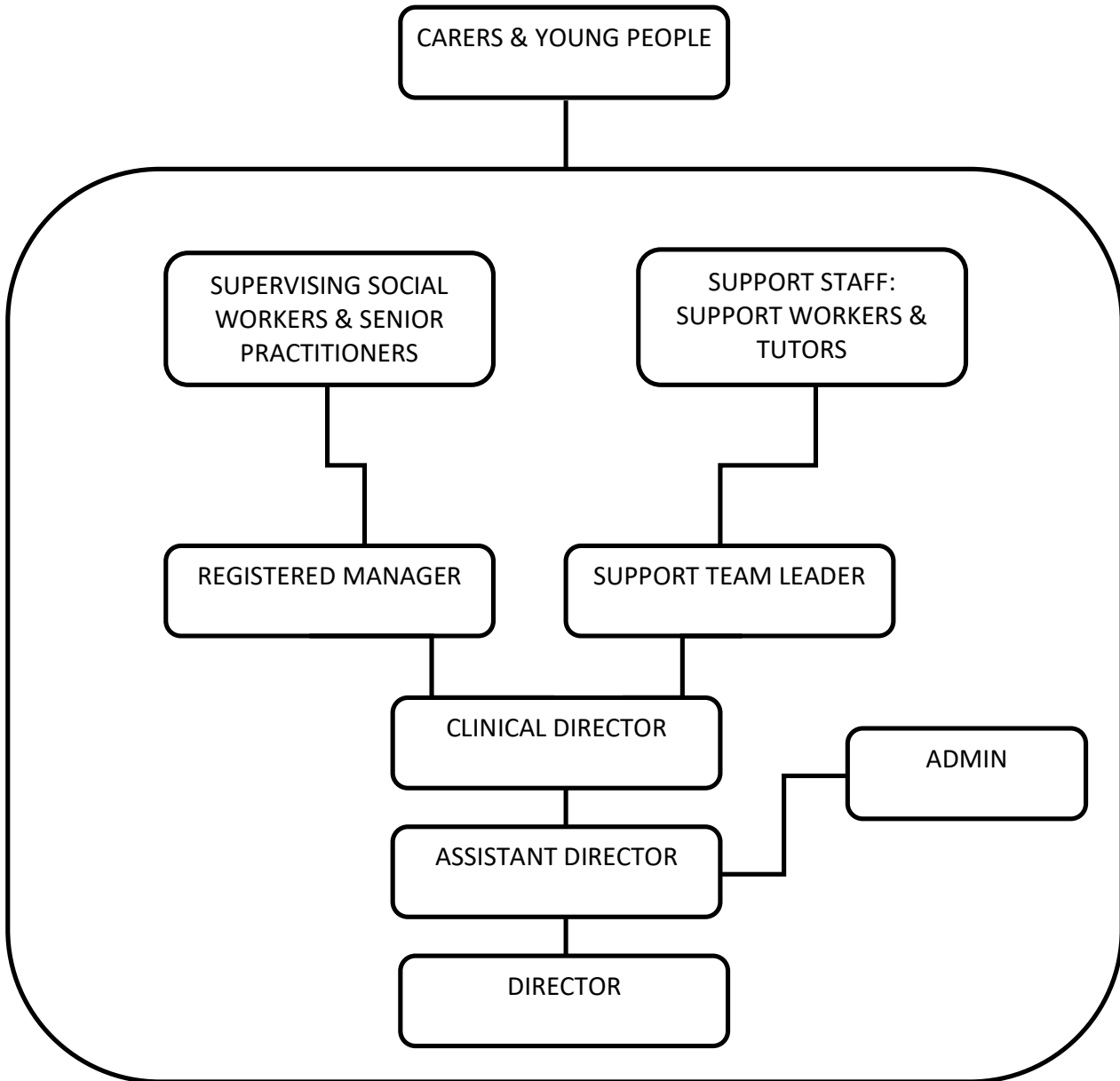
If young people feel a bit worried about being away from their carers in order to join the club, their carers are welcome, however, for others it is an opportunity to have a little time out from each other and show children they can go out and have fun and their carers are there to welcome them home a few hours later.

Our support is available on evenings and weekends if needed and our experience and primary research evidence is that carers and young people who get to know staff members and access fun/time out/coaching and mentoring experiences exceed expectations in terms of reported happiness, wellbeing, and general achievement. Carers are better able to balance their lives and young people, and gain more confidence and skills in safe environments, with people who understand how to help them if they need it. This is particularly advantageous if young people are not in school for more than a few days. Young people sometimes move to our foster carers from very long distances away and there may be a delay of a few weeks until a school is identified. Some of our young people may need time to get used to their new school and only go there for short times to begin with. In these cases, the child's social worker, together with our foster carers and our staff, work out how best to support a young person to get used to the routine of getting up and out to school and to doing some schoolwork. Importantly, we aim to build children and young people's confidence with adults as even a few weeks out of school plus a move is a lot to deal with. In some instances, children's social workers and their new school talk with us and we agree that an adult who knows the child can help them in their new school.

Mostly, this is to help them to understand rules and to feel safe. Usually, young people settle quickly and manage on their own however, their special people who have supported and mentored them stay in touch and take an interest in their progress.

Our foster carers find this assistance beneficial in many ways. We believe this ability to support such a situation is key to our overall outstanding roles of stability for young people.

9. Management & Staffing Structure



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT OURSELVES

The Management Team

Maria Jones – Director

I am the Director, Responsible Individual for Orchard Care. I qualified as a social worker in 1980 and worked as a practitioner, manager, and principal officer in five local authorities over a 23-year period. In 1999 I became an independent consultant and trainer. From 2000 to 2004 I was involved in the development of foster care in the private sector where I saw an opportunity to create a foster carer service designed for success. In 2005 Orchard Care was created. The company is a living expression of the values, principles, and experience of the people within and connected to the organisation. My involvement from 2005 in a Systemic Learning Programme provided an opportunity to consider ideas of how success and excellence show themselves in practice. A collaboration of Orchard Care staff, practitioners, organisational consultants, and

social philosophers have worked together to create a context in which the health and happiness of children comes first.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **06/04/2005**.

Sarah Jones – Assistant Director

I have worked at Orchard Care since May 2005. Prior to my employment here, I worked for a firm of solicitors, then went to university, and also held various positions including working in Greece with young people aged 0-17 years. I have A-Level Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology, a BSc in Biology, Certificate in Marketing, and Level 5 Diploma in Management. Following my degree, I worked for another foster care agency where I trained and ran their finance department. I then began work at Orchard Care and was involved in the initial set up and registration process.

My job title up until my maternity leave was Business & Finance Manager, but my span of interest and control had spread. I completed Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services. Having completed my family, I was ready to assume a key role within Orchard Care and became registered as Registered Manager in 2015. It was only intended I would be Registered Manager for a time limited whilst we recruited a new Manager. It was very rewarding managing the excellence of work, which produces such great outcomes and of course our continued development into ever more therapeutic ways of being. In 2021 Julia Robertson was appointed to actively take over as Registered Manager. Julia was registered in 2022 and I voluntarily cancelled my registration with Ofsted as of 1st May 2022.

I continue to be very passionate about fostering and the work we do. As Assistant Director I continue to be actively involved in carer recruitment, management of the Administration Team, and organisational development.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **05/05/2005** (Registered Manager: **18/08/15 – 30/04/22**) Role as Panel Adviser commenced on: **26/04/2018**.

Julia Robertson – Registered Manager

I came into post during July 2021. As the Registered Manager, I am responsible for the day-to-day management of the fostering service and supervision of the Social Work team at Orchard Care.

I have worked within health and social care for the past 37 years. I am a qualified social worker and learning disability nurse. I have a Level 5 Diploma in Management and have extensive experience in work as a manager within a range of services for children and families.

Prior to commencing my post with Orchard Care, I had previously worked for fifteen years as a Registered Manager within two independent fostering agencies. My role as Registered Manager provides me with so much job satisfaction. My role enables me to work closely with foster carers, and the team around a child, making a difference to children's lives.

I left my previous position, to join Orchard Care and become a part of a smaller organisation, that prides itself on providing bespoke, robust support to foster carers. Enabling carers to provide individual care to children which helps each child to achieve their personal potential.

In terms of my personal life, I have a partner and two adult sons. In my spare time I enjoy caring for my Siamese cats, watching films, and reading books. I love to travel both at home and abroad, and enjoy days out locally in the North East, visiting the beach, countryside, and places of interest.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **12/07/2021**.

Stephanie Hunter – Clinical Director

I have been employed as a Clinical Director for Orchard Care since February 2023. My aim is to strive to improve the outcomes for cared for children. I am developing our training offer and the link between training, reflection and direct action which improves the lives of our children in care.

I qualified in Social Work in 1997. Most of my career has focused on cared for children and supporting foster carers in different roles.

I have worked in Cafcass, children and families social work and substance misuse services. From 2002 to 2012 I set up and managed a mental health service for adopted and cared for children. This won three national awards including Beacon Status and Positive Practice awards 2006 and three local awards for innovative services to children and their carer's. I also Chaired an Independent Fostering Panel for many years. I worked full time as a senior university lecturer at Sunderland University for four years and then began to publish in relation to cared for children. I have developed many training programmes for foster carers.

I am fortunate to have presented nationally and internationally in relation to attachment and trauma and cared for children. I have worked with and delivered training/ keynote speeches to many leading organisations and councils including, Young People Now, House of Lords, Social Work England, Cafcass, Teesside, Durham, and Northumbria University, BAAF, NHS England, Malta International Acamh, Young Minds, AC Education, Action for Children and Barnardo's.

I was then employed as Head of Quality and Practice, Principal Social Worker for a local council until January 2023. I was very much involved in their Outstanding cared for children Ofsted inspection and Good in other areas.

During my career I have tried to innovate services and take a lead in relation to service improvement. For example, in 2021, I was funded to make a film for Social Work England based on my research with care experienced adults. I have also successfully evaluated adoption and therapy services. The former was commended at the adoption expert advisory Committee.

I was also Vice Chair of Adopt North East 2021 to 2022 and made several national webinars for a UK adoption charity.

I have an extensive CPD including specialist qualifications related to care for children including Dyadic Developmental Therapy, EMDR, Theraplay and Narrative therapy. I also have undertaken additional postgraduate training.

At Orchard Care I started by working within the Support Team and alongside the Social Work Team providing support. Structural changes were made on 20/04/23 when I gained the line management and supervisory responsibilities for the Support Team Leader and the Registered Manager.

Stephanie Hunter NNEB, Dip S/W, BA, BSC, MA, Advanced Award in Social Work, PGCE, FHEA

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **13/02/2023** (structural changes made on 20/04/23)

Nicole Purvis – Support Team Leader

I was a Manger in my previous employment and worked there for 12 years supervising a large team. My role was to support my team to deal with difficult and challenging situations, providing training, coaching and development opportunities for them, so they were equipped with the knowledge and encouragement to deliver the best service. I was very excited when the opportunity came up to work for Orchard Care and feel privileged that I am able to use the skills I have acquired to now work in position I feel very passionate about.

I have always been interested in working with children and spent over a year volunteering at a primary school working with children 4-6 years.

My parents are also foster carers and they have been for a lot of years, I have seen first-hand the importance and value that fostering brings, which has been another driving factor in the career change.

Outside of work I love nothing more than spending time with my family and friends, going for walks and reading.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **24/04/2023**.

Hayley Gawthorpe – Supervising Social Worker

I have been a qualified Social Worker for over 10 years. Prior to being a Social Worker I have always worked in a care environment. I completed a Diploma in childcare and education which led me to be a Nursery Nurse for many years with children 0-5 years. I then began working with adults with Learning Disabilities and completed a Level 3 NVQ in Health and Social Care.

As a Social Worker I have experience of working with adults and children who have autism. I thoroughly enjoyed this as I was able to get involved in activities with the young people such as Kayaking, rock climbing, bowling and more.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **02/11/2021**.

Melissa Renahan – Supervising Social Worker

I qualified as a social worker in 2012. Whilst undertaking my degree at Teesside university I worked in a secure mental health hospital offering support to patients who were detained under the Mental Health Act, services included male psychiatric intensive care, female personality disorder, alcohol detoxification and eating disorder units. Alongside this I have also gained invaluable experience working in Residential Children's homes, both Local Authority and within the private sector.

After I qualified, I worked for a Local Authority as a Personal Advisor and subsequently changed my role to a Looked After Through Care social worker therefore I have been fortunate to gain a vast range of experience including knowledge of the looked after processes and leaving care. I'm a motivated, caring, and empathic person and strive to ensure I truly understand individual's and family's needs offering creative solutions to create positive change for all.

My range of experience has developed my skills and my desire to offer support to children who have not been provide with the care they deserve, so what better way to continue this, support carers and their families to care for these little people, develop foster carers skills and also expand my knowledge of Fostering, with the aim of providing amazing outcomes.

I'm excited to meet all the Foster Carers at Orchard Care as I have heard many wonderful stories and I look forward to starting work with you very soon.

Commenced employment at Orchard Care on 17.07.2023.

Paul Anderson – Social Work Assistant

I have been with Orchard Care since 2009. My job entails assisting colleagues and foster carers in promoting welfare and educational attainment to young people in care.

My history prior to joining Orchard Care consisted of some informal experience working with Hartlepool Foster Carers Association and completing my Educational Studies degree at Hull University specialising in an early year's branch way. I feel it has prepared me well for doing a job such as this, as the modules were wide and varied. These modules included the psychology of learning, social policy and learning, and learning disabilities, such as Autism. As somebody who is passionate about working to improve the welfare and educational needs of looked after children, I feel the opportunity I have been given with Orchard Care is an

excellent one for me to embark upon a career in this field. In my spare time I enjoy doing an array of activities, with football being my main passion. I am currently thoroughly enjoying what I am doing and not looking too far ahead. Possibly one day, I may look to embark upon a career in social work, but for now I am passionate and committed to my role of Support at Orchard Care.

I hope to deepen my knowledge and continue to do everything I can to support the services given to young people and their carers.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **12/10/2009** Social Work Assistant from: **03/03/2016**
Outcomes Co-ordinator from: **01/11/19** Social Work Assistant from: **25/11/2021**.

Kate Rishik – Senior Learning Support Worker

I commenced my employment in March 2007. From an early age I have always been passionate about working with children and this is why I later went on to complete the BTEC National Diploma in Childcare qualification. After qualifying, I worked as part of a NHS team supporting families of children with severe complex needs in the community. I continued in this role for several years and gained valuable experience to which still assists me today as a support worker within Orchard Care. At times our workload can be hectic but very rewarding. I adapt myself well to new environments, maintaining professionalism in challenging situations. I use my initiative effectively to resolve any situations that may arise and always endeavour to work to a high standard in whatever role I may play. I enjoy planning relevant experiences for the young people with their well-being and positive development at the forefront. As a result, I have been able to form positive relationships with the young people I have supported over the years. I strive to deliver a high quality of service and achieve very good outcomes in whatever I am involved with. I continue to enhance my knowledge and skills through experience and training; I also look forward to developing new skills in Life Story work and refreshing practical core skills associated with young people with complex special needs. I bring enthusiasm, dedication, and a desire to enrich the lives of the young people in our care.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **03/03/2007**.

Gareth Williams – Senior Learning Support Worker

My name is Gareth Williams. I work for Orchard Care as a Support Worker. I have been in and around foster care all of my life as my grandma has fostered for 40 years. I enjoy my job as I get on great with the children. I have worked with Orchard Care a while now and I love it compared to the years of soul-destroying factory work. I have been part of the Children Who Foster project which is designed to help the siblings/children of Foster Carers feel they part of something and not being pushed aside which we feel will help the placement.

More recently, I have expanded my work to include external training plus special training from an Occupational Therapist and staff experienced at working with people with Autism. I work with a very broad range of children, mostly in the community helping them to join in. I enjoy my work and feel that I make a difference.

I have completed my Diploma Level 3 Health and Social Care.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **19/04/2010**.

The Panel Social Workers

Cheryl Adamson – Social Worker

My main job is within an Adoption Team as an assessing Social Worker. I support preparation group training, complete initial screenings, and Prospective Adopters Report (PAR) assessments. Once a child is placed with an adopter I support them until an Adoption Order is granted by the courts.

I have worked in Children's Services since 2007. I have worked predominantly with Looked After Children (LAC) progressing plans for children who for whatever reason cannot return to live with their birth family. I have sought to achieve permanency via alternative means whether this be: Kinship Care, Foster Care, a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Adoption or in some cases rehabilitation back into the care of their birth family.

My role is centred on supporting young people in placements, assessing, and maintaining contact with family members and life story work. On a regular basis I organise and prepare for 6 monthly LAC reviews and foster carer reviews.

I have attended both Adoption and Fostering Panels in order to progress plans for children. As an extra duty I have also worked as part of a panel of professionals responsible agreeing Foster Carer Reviews.

My current role varies from day to day which is an environment in which I thrive. Working within a statutory setting has improved my skills and knowledge of Social Work theory in attachment, task centred practice and child development theories.

Panel Role at Orchard Care commenced on: **08/05/2013**.

Nicola Stott – Social Worker

I qualified as a social worker in 2005 and hold a master's degree. I have a wealth of experience across Childrens Social Care.

I have worked across a number of Local Authorities. I was the acting Adoption Team Manager before moving on to become the Locality Manager for Childrens Centre's. Following this I managed a large Local Authority Fostering Team, acting as Panel Advisor, providing quality assurance of assessments, and overseeing all recruitment and retention of foster carers. The team included Form Fs, Form Cs and Kinship Care support services.

Following this, I moved to become an Ofsted Registered Manager for a new Independent Fostering Agency. I was Manager throughout the initial setting up and Ofsted registration period, writing and implementing all policies and procedures. I also recruited a staff team and panel members.

I now work as the Designated Social Care Officer for a Local Authority working across social care and SEND services. I have responsibility for quality of social care input into EHCPs and offer safeguarding advice to SEND decision making panels.

Panel Role at Orchard Care commenced on: **02/02/2023**.

Tina Treacy – Social Worker

My main job is within a court team as a specialist assessment practitioner. I complete an array of different assessments required by the court to enable them to make decisions in the best interests of children. I also complete Form F assessments independently for independent fostering agencies and the Local Authority.

I have worked in Children's Services since 2013 after completing a master's degree, changing my career from a forensic scientist to a social worker. This was due to becoming foster carers and being passionate about therapeutic care and change. I have fostered many children and I am now even a foster grandma!

I have attended Fostering Panels as a foster carer, fostering assessor and member of the Panel.

My passion is therapeutic care for looked after children and holistic support for foster carers. I also love to travel and cruise all around the world.

Panel Role at Orchard Care commenced on: **04/06/2022**.

Tutors**Susan Smith – Primary Teacher/ Tutor**

Self-employed role commenced: **13/05/2020**.

Caitlin Watson – Maths Tutor

My passion for maths derives from its fascinating history, and I am always eager to share fun 'behind the scenes' information about the topics we cover with the students. I hope by sharing this information and by my passion for the field I can help students not only overcome their difficulties with the content but also increase their interest in and appreciation for the subject itself.

I have an outstanding academic record, a maths degree from a Russell Group University, am a fully qualified teacher, and have many years of private tutoring experience (including time spent privately tutoring in China).

Self-employed role commenced: **30/01/2021**.

The Administration Team***Jane Oughton – Office Administrator***

I joined Orchard Care as an Administrator in October 2019. Prior to this I studied Childcare and achieved a Level 3 Diploma in this subject. I now have around 10 years administration experience. Before joining Orchard Care, I had just ended my role with Durham County Council in the Children's Services Department as my temporary contract had come to an end.

In my spare time I enjoy looking after my niece and nephew and have a passion for animals. I have volunteered at a stray dog charity before, helping look after the animals in need. My Labrador Toby keeps me very busy.

I am enjoying working at Orchard Care. I feel their values and their level of care for the children is top priority, which is something I feel strongly about.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **14/10/2019**.

Stephanie Frank – Senior Administrator Coordinator

I joined the team at Orchard Care, April 2022. I have worked with in an administrative role through-out my adult life and have over 10 years of experience. Before joining Orchard Care I worked for a Social Housing Company in their Health and Safety team.

I currently have three rescue animals who keep me very busy. My dog is Flicka a female 4-year-old long-haired German Shepherd. My 2 cats are both ginger British Short-haired and they are Gus who is 11-year-old and Kitty who is 4 years old. I also help with transport for an animal charity called “All Bullies Rescue”. I help with the transport runs which helps to make sure that bulldogs that are rescued can be moved and they get the correct care and treatment.

Employment at Orchard Care commenced on: **06/04/2022**.

10. Number of Foster Carers

We currently have 21 fostering households registered with Orchard Care.

11. Number of foster children/ young people placed

We currently have 28 children and young people placed with Orchard Care foster carers.

12. Fostering Panel

Orchard Care’s Fostering Panel meets typically on a bi-monthly basis to review potential foster carers and recommend approval to the Agency Decision Maker. The panel members receive training on the remit of Orchard Care North East Ltd.

The Panel are:

Lynsey Eglington	Chairperson
Cheryl Adamson	Independent Social Worker
Betty Bolton	Independent Panel Member
Sara Dawson	Independent Panel Member
Janet Gardner	Independent Panel Member
Sue Smith	Independent Panel Member
Trevor Carter	Independent Panel Member
Tracy Alden	Independent Panel Member
Ken Daghish	Independent Panel Member
Kirsty Leach	Independent Panel Member
Nicola Stott	Independent Social Worker
Tina Treacy	Independent Social Worker
Sarah Jones	Panel Adviser

13. Agency Decision Maker

Christine Priestman is Agency Decision Maker.

Christine is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England.

14. Independent Reviewing Officer

Amanda Barron – Independent Reviewing Officer

I obtained a CCETSW Diploma in Social Work in 2000 and a BA (Hons) Degree in Social Work Studies in 2002. I have been a practicing social worker in the field of childcare for over 17 years. For the first 6 years I practiced in Local Authority settings undertaking preventative family support, child protection and long-term social work. Since 2007 I have focused on fostering in the independent sector. I have been employed as a Senior Supervising Social Worker, Panel and Recruitment Manager and Independent Foster Carer Reviewing Officer. I have experience from the initial point of contact when prospective foster carers enquire, to pre-approval training, Form F Assessment, Fostering Panel, completion of TSD Standards, ongoing supervision, training, and the Review process. I have been an Independent Foster Carer Reviewing Officer since May 2015. I endeavor to thoroughly review all documentation and comprehensively chair reviews, producing reports that accurately reflect each individual foster carers review period. My parents were foster carers, which gave me valuable insight into the practical experience of fostering. As a child and young adult, I lived alongside over sixty children. My academic and work experience, coupled with my experiences of fostering, equip me with knowledge, insight, values, and qualities that are desirable in ethical social work practice.

Contract commenced: **27/06/2018**.

Amanda is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England.

15. Complaints & Outcomes

There have been 0 complaints received in the past 12 months.