

Job Title:	Journey Guide
Team/Service Area:	Foster with North East
Salary/Grade:	Grade 5
Line Manager:	Team Manager
Direct Reports:	none
Location:	Agile, across North east

About the Role

The Journey Guide is a newly created role directed by the DfE which provides relationship-based support to prospective foster carers from their first enquiry through to approval and beyond. The role exists to improve conversion and retention, reduce early drop-off, and ensure foster carers experience a consistent, reassuring and accessible single point of contact throughout their fostering journey.

This is a non-statutory role that complements — but does not replace — the responsibilities of supervising social workers, assessing social workers or peer-support/buddy schemes. Journey Guides form part of the “team around the carer”, offering continuity, clarity and emotional/practical support at key stages, particularly during “firsts” (first assessment visit, first panel, first child, first review).

Journey Guides support the Foster with North East regional hub, working with all 12 local authorities to deliver a high-quality, relational recruitment experience.

This role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore requires a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

Key Responsibilities

1. End-to-End Relationship-Based Support

- Act as the named single point of contact for prospective foster carers from enquiry through approval and into their first year post-approval.
- Build strong, trusting relationships that promote confidence, clarity and emotional safety.
- Provide reassurance, guidance and encouragement at key “firsts” (first assessment visit, first panel, first child, first review for example).
- Maintain a caseload of foster carers, enabling high-quality relational support.

2. Early Introduction & Proactive Engagement

- Introduce the Journey Guide role early in the application stage to reduce early drop-off.
- Offer proactive check-ins, coaching-style support and timely responses to queries.
- Identify early signs of disengagement and intervene with tailored support.

3. Managing the Recruitment Journey

- Support carers through each stage of the recruitment and assessment process, ensuring they understand expectations, timelines and next steps.
- Work collaboratively within recruitment process
- Coordinate access to blended learning options (online modules, weekend/evening sessions, observation/roleplay).
- Ensure carers are prepared for panel, assessment visits and early care experiences.

4. Role Boundaries & Team Integration

- Work alongside supervising social workers, assessing social workers and buddy/peer support schemes.
- Provide clarity to carers about the Journey Guide's role, responsibilities and boundaries.
- Contribute to the development of consistent materials, guidance and communication tools used across the region.

5. Communication & Relationship Management

- Support from the first point of contact for fostering enquiries across the North East region.
- Communicate effectively with individuals with varying levels of understanding.
- Represent the Fostering Hub at meetings and events where appropriate.
- Provide clear, accurate written communication including follow-up emails, guidance materials and updates.

6. Record Keeping & Information Management

- Maintain accurate, timely case records using digital systems.
- Ensure all information is recorded in line with GDPR, FOI and organisational information security standards.
- Produce high-quality written reports or summaries where required.

7. Safeguarding & Professional Standards

- Uphold safeguarding responsibilities, recognising the needs and vulnerabilities of cared for children and prospective carers.
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of work.

- Work within FwNE's policies, procedures, code of conduct and professional standards.

8. Supervision, Performance & Service Development

- Participate in structured supervision and reflective practice.
- Meet clear performance expectations relating to caseload management, responsiveness and carer progression.
- Contribute to testing and refining the Journey Guide model with carers and frontline teams.
- Support development of standardised materials and communication tools.

9. Service Support & Flexibility

- Work flexibly, including occasional evenings/weekends, to meet service needs.
- Plan and organise workload effectively, demonstrating initiative and problem-solving.
- Offer guidance to colleagues when required.
- Support services contributing to matching foster carers with the needs of children.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Champion equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of your work and the communities you assist.

Our Expectations

You must undertake this role in accordance with the requirements set out below:

- Comply with Together for Children's Code of Conduct, People policies and procedures, Health and Safety Policy and EDI Statement.
- Uphold all relevant professional policies, standards and legislative requirements
- Adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles in relation to the management and handling of personal and/or sensitive information and respect the privacy of personal information managed by Together for Children Sunderland.
- Comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- This position is a politically restricted post as identified by Together for Children Sunderland and in accordance with The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (LGHA).
-] Follow Together for Children Sunderland's and NHS ICB's information security standards.

This job description is a guide to the duties you will be expected to perform. It is not an exhaustive list, and you may be required to undertake other tasks and duties not listed that are reasonably commensurate with the job role and grade of the post.

Where a fundamental change to the job description is needed this will be discussed with the postholder prior to any changes being made

Date: 23/07/2026

Person Specification – Journey Guide

The essential requirements for this post and how candidates will be assessed are set out below. Where ‘application form’ is the method of assessment, candidates should evidence that they meet these criteria, to be successful at the shortlisting stage.

Essential Requirements	Method of Assessment
Qualifications • 3 GCSEs including English and Maths, or equivalent. • Willingness to undertake further training relevant to fostering recruitment, coaching and relationship based practice. • Full driving licence and access to a vehicle (or ability to meet mobility requirements). •	Application Form
Experience • Providing advice, information or guidance to members of the public or carers. • Relationship based or customer support roles. • Working in a busy team environment. • Record keeping and producing written information. • Experience in children’s services, fostering or family support (desirable). • Previous foster carer experience (desirable).	Application Form
Knowledge and Understanding • Understanding of fostering recruitment processes and the role of assessing social workers. • Awareness of safeguarding principles and the needs of children in care. • Understanding of the social, emotional and developmental needs of children and young people. • Knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion principles. • Familiarity with Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, Teams).	Application Form

• Understanding of relationship based practice and its role in retention.	
Skills and Abilities • Ability to build rapport and trust with prospective foster carers. • Strong communication skills—verbal, written and digital. • Ability to provide coaching-style support and encouragement. • Effective time management and ability to prioritise workload. • Ability to work flexibly and adapt to changing environments. • Confident in liaising with professionals and challenging appropriately when needed. • Competent in digital record keeping and producing written reports. • Resilient, self motivated and solution focused. • Ability to work proactively and independently within clear role boundaries.	Application Form / Interview
Other Requirements • Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. • Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. • Ability to work occasional evenings/weekends. • Ability to travel across the North East region.	Application Form / Interview

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