

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

## Ethelbert Fostering Services

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Ethelbert Fostering Services is part of  
Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited  
Registered in England No 03291503

**Ethelbert Childrens Services**  
Exceeding Outcomes

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## **MATTERS INCLUDED IN THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

As required by Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011

1. A Statement of the overall Aims and Objectives.
2. Status and Constitution.
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4. Carers.
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18. Review of Placement Plans.
19. Independent Visitor.

**This Services is Registered and Inspected by Ofsted, Freshford House, Redcliffe Way, Bristol, BS1 6NL. Tel: 0845 6404040. The Ofsted Inspector for this Service is Mark Blesky.**

## Statement of Purpose and Function

Ethelbert Fostering Services provides this document in line with its responsibilities under Regulation 3(1) of the fostering Services Regulations 2002 and wishes to ensure that it is available to all those persons specified therein on request.

Ethelbert Fostering Services provides this Statement as a matter of course to all local authorities expressing an interest in the services provided. Ethelbert Fostering Services is obliged to perform a Review of the Quality of Care provided by the agency and to produce a report detailing its findings at appropriate intervals under regulation 42 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. We would like to ensure that all those persons who may wish to do so are able to obtain the information contained in the Statement, as well as a copy of the Regulation 42 Report Quality of Care. We would request that all placing authorities make this Statement of Purpose and Function available to any child, or the parent of any child, placed with this agency and provide information to them of the availability of the Report, obtainable at all times from this agency.

If any person reading this Statement would like any further explanation of its contents or experiences any difficulty reading it or the Regulation 42 Report referred to above, due to disability, language or any other reason, we will be happy to make arrangements for it to be made available in a suitable format or other accessible alternative.

### 1. Aims and Objectives

**The primary aim of Ethelbert Childrens Services, the parent company of Ethelbert Fostering Services, is to provide a caring child centred service conforming to the highest standards of professional practice, which is constantly updated and improved in line with the latest experience and research findings.** It is acknowledged that a child can enter local authority care for any number of reasons. Some children will be hardly known to the local authority and there will be a need for a thorough assessment before they can move on to either a fostering or a specialist resource, or where possible, return to their own families. Others will come because of a breakdown of a previous foster placement, or a prior residential placement. For some it will be a placement of last resort and the end of a long line of unsuccessful residential and fostering placements. Each child will be different and bring with them their own particular histories and needs. For this reason, **the fundamental tenet of our organisation is that we should be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the child rather than expect the child to conform to a rigid ethos, however caring or well intentioned.**

To this end Ethelbert Childrens Services has developed a range of resources, designed to meet the differing needs of the children placed with us. As an organisation we have always welcomed the inspection and monitoring of the registration authority and have valued the comments and observations of the local inspectors. This input has enabled us to make changes in light of their recommendations and strive to continually improve our practice.

**Ethelbert Fostering Services** was founded as a response to the needs of children and young people referred to the parent company and have been operational since 1998. Ethelbert Fostering Services was originally developed to offer placing authorities a resource which offers many of the tried and tested strengths and structures of a residential children's placement within a real family home using carefully matched, highly experienced carers working under the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The ensuing benefits to children and young people of this innovative and original resource have been proved with the success of the scheme to date. In 2002, in observance of the group's overall ethos to be flexible and to further expand the range of care available to meet the needs of children and placing authorities, Ethelbert Fostering Services developed and inaugurated the Fostering Service to work alongside the Residential Family Placement resource. This service offers a more recognisable fostering role to carers, children and local authorities but with the considerable resources, support and benefits which ensue from inclusion within the group of companies of a major childcare provider.

All carers are approved using the BAAF approved assessment procedure and are registered foster carers. Careful matching procedures are used to ensure that placements are made with the best possible carers. Carers are matched dependent on the individual circumstances of each particular child and careful regard is paid to a carer's experience, background and family circumstances before any placement is made. It is expected that children and young people placed under the Residential Family Placement scheme will have additional needs and be placed with carers possessing exceptional levels of experience and skills. This has often been gained through many years of working in a residential setting, where additional resources are available to them to meet the needs of the child or young person to ensure the best possible outcome for the placement.

In 2004 the Supported Accommodation Scheme was established to provide a high quality resource where young people can gain the valuable skills and knowledge they will need to go on to live independently in the community. The scheme is both flexible and responsive to the needs of young people and accommodators are approved through the agency's fostering panel using procedures which mirror those of their fostering counterparts. Opportunities may be provided for young people in family and other settings including

monitored and supported independent accommodation. This resource provides an excellent facility for local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities to young people leaving care.

The company encourages our children to use local facilities and take part in community activities. We have our own schools, but where possible, our children go to the local mainstream schools and are encouraged to make friends and contacts outside the home. We take care to ensure that we do not become an inward looking community, which ignores the world outside. We try not to forget that our children may only be with us for a relatively short period of time and that it is our responsibility to prepare them to live and cope with outside demands and pressures.

**Our aim is to provide an atmosphere conducive to positive growth within a secure family setting, in which carers adopt a parental and caring approach to the children. This is engendered by an ongoing training programme for all carers and the sensitive and flexible supervision of placements by experienced supervising social workers who remain focused on the needs of the children in placement at all times as well as professional therapeutic input as required.**

Rules, discipline and boundaries are essential for children and young people and as in any normal home, the company tries to ensure that these are kept to a minimum, but those used should make sense and ensure the well-being and safety of the children placed, the carers and their families. Discipline is referred to in more detail below, but essentially it must be seen to be just and realistic. Also children need boundaries to test themselves against, but they must be such that they allow personal growth and do not impinge on the individual responsibility of the child

In the best interest of the child it is the policy of the company to have a clear contractual agreement with the placing local authority, which reflects the partnership arrangement that exists between the two agencies. Ethelbert Fostering Services acknowledges that it is with the placing authority that case responsibility lies. Equally we are aware that the Children Act 1989 places greater emphasis on 'parental responsibility' and we are caring for children on behalf of others highlighting the necessity to work in partnership with all those involved. Accordingly we stress the following elements: -

- i) On arrival or as soon as is practicable, each child will have a written individual Care Plan, to which the relevant parties (i.e., child, parents, local authority, social worker, and carer) will be signatories.

- ii) We will give a commitment to keep all parties informed of all relevant events in the child's progress and where appropriate this will be in writing. We will ensure that placing authority's child protection and complaints procedures are carried out in both spirit and letter.
- iii) We will give local authorities a clear statement of what services we provide and at what cost. We are aware of the financial constraints on local authorities at this time and we therefore seek to keep our costs at a level commensurate with a good level of service, which at the same time gives value for money. Placing local authorities will be given adequate notice of any increase in fees, which will be kept to the minimum and will usually be in line with inflation.

Finally, it is our aim to seek, wherever possible, to maintain and support a child's placement at Ethelbert Fostering Services despite the difficulties that high levels of challenging behaviour can bring to carers and their lives. We consequently provide carers with exceptional levels of support which include daily written reporting to the agency for all carers, direct formal supervision and support at intervals of no more than three weeks, high levels of telephone contact and a motivated, experienced and skilled supervising social work team. We are aware that for some children, an enforced move is another failure in a long line of failures and we therefore seek to avoid this if at all possible. Obviously, we have to consider the interests and the quality of life of the other children in the house, the family and the local community, but subject to this, our general aim is to try to work through the problems to the benefit of the child. Where we find it necessary to ask for the removal of a child, we will seek to do this in a positive and planned manner and allow local authorities a reasonable amount of time to find an alternative placement.

## **2. Status and Constitution**

Ethelbert Fostering Services is a trading name of Ethelbert Childrens Services Limited – a Private Limited Company.

Ethelbert Fostering Services provides accommodation to children and young people and has duties similar to those imposed on local authorities under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Arrangement for Placements of Children (General) Regulations 1991. We also operate within the framework of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2002 and the UK National Standards for Foster Care 1998.

### 3. Management Structure

Ethelbert Fostering Services additionally have access to the group's Board of Directors and Heads of Service as a resource. These individuals bring together a varied range of experience, skills and expertise including social work, education, industry and finance, all focused on providing the best quality care for the young people we look after. Each Director/Head of Service has specific areas of responsibility within the group in which they take the lead and ensure that practice is meeting organisational and national standards.

**Leslie Davenport** is the Responsible Individual and Managing Director. He holds the Level 5 NVQ in Strategic Management and has worked within fostering and residential care settings since 1990 including management at a senior level. He joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 1999.

**Bernie Davenport** (Director & Company Secretary) has been involved with the fostering and residential care sectors working with local authorities and the private sector since 1972. Over this period she has worked at all levels and in many positions including as a foster carer, family centre worker, residential home manager and company management at a senior level. She holds the Certificate of Child and Adolescent Development from Christchurch College, Canterbury. Joint Founder of Ethelbert Childrens Services.

**Andy Marshall** (Operations Director) Andy joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 1999. His responsibilities include financial planning and systems, human resources and technical coordination of the operation and development of the Company. Andy's previous experience was with a major firm of Chartered Accountants managing a wide range of clients. Andy holds the NVQ 5 in Operational Management.

**Lawrence Best** (Child Protection & Safeguarding Coordinator). Lawrence holds the Diploma in Therapeutic Childcare and the Level 5 NVQ in Operational Management. He has held management positions since 1986 in both childcare and outside fields. He joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 1995 having experience of working with looked after children in various settings and roles including residential work, house parent and special education needs units.

**Lee Davenport** (Head of Service Resources) Lee holds the NEBOSH health and safety management qualification and is currently undertaking the NVQ 5 in Operational Management. He joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 1988 holding positions within the fostering and residential children's services at a senior management level. His current responsibilities include health and safety, maintenance and transport management.

**Sarah Tait** (Health and Welfare Manager). Sarah is a Registered Learning Disabilities / Dual Diagnosis Nurse from the Lancashire College of Nursing and Health Studies she also studied Teaching and Assessing in Clinical Practice at the University of Huddersfield. Sarah has spent the last 12 years as a qualified Nurse working within a variety of settings specialising in working with those with extreme challenging behaviour. Sarah has worked within the private sector children's residential care since 2003 and joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 2007. Her current role involves monitoring children's health needs, devising health action plans, ensuring health assessments are up to date and recommendations acted upon. She is also involved with staff training, policy development, and supporting staff teams and managers to develop skills and practice, to achieve good health outcomes for the children in our care.

**Jack Banner** (Head of Education) Jack joined the Company in 2008 having worked as a Teacher and Head Teacher since 1978. His experience includes periods in local authority schools, with the British Army and in the private sector. His initial teacher training was completed at Culham College, Oxford where he obtained a Professional Teaching Certificate in Mathematics and Integrated Studies and has since enhanced his qualifications with a Diploma in Mathematics, a Master of Arts in Education and is currently carrying out research for a Doctorate in Education at The London Metropolitan University. Jack has also been a foster carer since 1978.

The agency also employs Heads of Service for finance, personal, training, operational resources, maintenance and administration

**Debi Atkin** is a qualified Social Worker and is employed as the Acting Manager. Debi has worked within social care since 1988 gaining experience in children's residential units as a support worker and as a Manager. For six years Debi worked for a community housing trust as an Area Manager for six projects providing services for vulnerable adolescents and during this time set up and developed services for young people and their families. Whilst as a Service Manager Debi also set up and developed services for unaccompanied minors providing accommodation and services for 1,800 16/17 year olds. Debi was also a Foster Carer for two years. Debi completed her NVQ5 in Management in 2010.

**Barry Chandler** Fostering Referrals Manager whose responsibilities include ensuring that sufficient information is obtained from the referring Authority to enable our social work team to make informed decisions when matching Looked After Children with our foster carers. Barry liaises with the Registered Manager and Finance Director to prepare contracts and negotiate care package. Barry started in his child care career in 1980, working for KCC as a residential social worker which was an enjoyable period of ten years before moving to the private sector taking up the post of deputy team manager of an adolescent unit. He then moved to an independent fostering agency one

of the largest in the country supporting foster carers rising to the position of Assistant Director. After several years following the take over of the agency by NCH, he became a founder/ director of Associated FosterCare Services which is now part of Ethelbert Children Services.

**Graham Phillips** a Supervising Social Worker with over twenty five years experience in social care joined the team in August 2006. Graham has a background of working in an observation and assessment centre followed by the role of Head of Care in a residential school. More recently Graham has supported foster carers for another Independent Fostering Agency.

**Teresa Morgan** is a qualified Social Worker and is employed as the Assistant Manager. Teresa has over 20 years' experience of working in child/social care. Firstly as a playgroup supervisor leading onto setting up and running parenting groups in a family centre. In 1999 she was employed by a housing trust to set up and develop a mediation service for young people aged eight to sixteen and their families. As the service expanded she was promoted to Team Leader and was responsible for setting up and managing the service throughout Kent. Teresa joined the fostering agency in 2002 firstly as a support social worker prior to completing her Dip.Sw. 2006.

**Tracy Price** is a qualified social worker and is employed as an Internal Reviewing Officer. Tracy completed the Diploma in Social Work along with a BA Honours Degree in Applied Social Studies in 1998. Since qualifying, Tracy has worked as a social worker in a variety of settings; Education, Youth Offending, Substance Misuse and Sure Start. In 2006, Tracy relocated to Thanet and took a position at EFS as a Supervising Social Worker. In 2011, Tracy's role within the team changed to a Reviewing Officer with a remit to review the suitability and competence of approved foster carers ensuring they provide a safe, healthy, nurturing and learning environment for the children/young people in their care. This new role within the team has been created to provide an additional level of quality assurance within EFS.

**Adam Highsted** is a Supervising Social Worker who joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in 2002 as a Learning Support Assistant and also providing shift cover in the residential units. Adam studied for relevant qualifications before embarking on his Diploma in Social Work. Adam completed his second year placement with the fostering team and was offered a permanent position in August 2006.

**Nikki Goldfinch** is a Supervising Social Worker who gained her BA Hons. in Social Work in 2007. Nikki began her career in social care in 2003 working in a residential home with adults with learning disabilities. She then transferred to children's social care, working as a residential support worker for Ethelbert Childrens Services before commencing her Social Work degree in 2004. Since qualifying, Nikki has gained experience in local authority Children and

Families Initial Assessment team and Family Support. Nikki joined Ethelbert Fostering Services in April 2010.

**Vickie Lawson** is a supervising social worker who completed her BA(Hons) social work degree in 2008. Vickie began her social care career in 2002 in secure residential work with young offenders before going on to be a foster carer for another independent fostering agency. When Vickie qualified as a social worker she went on to work with the Youth Offending Team at Medway, working within the court system as well as supporting young people within the community. Vickie joined EFS in October 2011 as a Supervising Social Worker.

**Theresa Hammond** has 16 years post qualifying experience in Child Care Practice and worked for a variety of local authorities in England and Wales. Part of her duties have included, front line social work, s.47 enquiries and children in need s.17 children Act 1989. Theresa has also managed an independent family centre for pre-school aged families. Theresa joined EFS in November 2011 as a Supervising Social Worker.

The agency has an administration team comprising of four full time workers and one part-time worker:-

**Pauline Hardiman-Plant** joined the team as Administration Manager in July 2006. Pauline gained five RSA secretarial qualifications whilst at College and subsequently held a number of management and senior administration positions within the private care sector prior to joining the agency.

**Val Bishop** joined the administration team at Head Office in July 2008 and joined the administration team at Fostering in November 2008. Val has a wide range of administration experience and knowledge.

**Michelle Humphrey** joined the Ethelbert Childrens Services administration team at Head Office in October 2000 and has since moved to the administration team at the fostering office in February 2009. Michelle has a wide range of administration experience and knowledge.

**Emma Bailey** joined the Fostering administration team in July 2010. Emma has undertaken two years of administration training and has joined Ethelbert Childrens Services in order to expand and develop her career.

**Amanda Shaw** joined Ethelbert Childrens Services Administration Team in at Head Office in April 2008 and has since moved to the Administration Team at Fostering in April 2011. Amanda has a vast knowledge of the Company and experience within.

#### **4. Carers**

The carers are the company's primary resource and the skill and expertise of its carers is of an extremely high standard. All carers are selected for their abilities and competencies and all have successfully been assessed against the fourteen areas of competence recommended by the Fostering Network and the agency's own requirements. Carers are selected, additionally, to have substantial experience in the fostering and child care related field before becoming part of this resource. The fostering service since inauguration has continued to have high expectations of its foster carers in line with the standards required of their colleagues. The company is currently in a state of expansion and now has a sub office in Bromley Kent. The agency intends to offer a wider range of choice to meet the needs of the children and young people referred to the company. In January 2011 we have thirty nine families and fifty six foster children.

## **5. Complaints**

Ethelbert Childrens Services has a Policy, which fully acknowledges the principles of the Children Act, the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991, local relevant Child Safeguarding Boards and is being updated to include the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This is made known to children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. In all cases any Child Safeguarding Procedure will always take precedence.

The Registered Manager will ensure that **ALL** complaints and representations will be recorded in writing, along with any action taken and the outcome of the investigation. It is our aim for any complaint to be resolved as safely, and as soon as is possible, as near to the point at which it arose whilst maintaining a level of independence dependent on the nature and level of the complaint. All complaints will be addressed seriously and be responded to within a maximum of 28 days.

Most authorities now have their own particular complaints procedures for children in care and these differ from authority to authority and our own procedures may run in tandem. We seek to ensure that all children are made aware of how they can make a formal complaint and of the correct procedures for their particular authority. All children are issued with information on placement. We also give an undertaking that the placing authority will be informed immediately a child makes a complaint.

For authorities that are some distance from the home, we would assign a senior member of the management team or a consultant who is independent of the home to deal with the complaint and assist the child to make a formal complaint. We will also furnish the authority with a written

report detailing the substance of the complaint and the action taken to assist the child.

In addition to the above all allegations and serious complaints are reported to our own local authority and Ofsted.

## **6. Recruitment of Staff**

As with any progressive and expanding company, recruitment of carers is an ongoing process. Ethelbert Fostering Services places the utmost importance on the quality and skills of its staff and carers and is guided by the recommendations made by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and the Fostering Network (formerly the NFCA) in particular in its induction and recruitment strategies. The company, in its recruitment policies, attempts to reflect the community it represents and serves and to offer a flexible and comprehensive range of care through which it can effectively address the needs of the children placed in their care. The full process is detailed in Information for Prospective Carers which is available for inspection at any time and is given to all parties expressing an interest in becoming carers with Ethelbert Fostering Services along with this Statement of Purpose and Function.

## **7. Training**

Ethelbert Childrens Services gives considerable priority to staff and carer training and operates its own Training Centre in Westgate, Kent staffed by a full-time Training Manager with a support worker to co-ordinate the training needs of all staff. The company takes the view that training is not simply a matter of attending the occasional course, but is an integral part of the caring task. It is in this context that we seek to develop our training programme and the skills of all of our staff. Carers receive regular training sessions alongside their colleagues who are working in the organisation's residential homes and some fostering specific training which it runs specifically for their needs. The organisation operates an ongoing cyclic training programme for all carers and staff and has been progressively developing more targeted training for the needs of individual carers in line with recommendations and best practice. By such means we seek to develop carers and staff by devising and implementing individual programmes designed to meet each person's particular needs.

Ethelbert Childrens Services, through the provision of the group's own Training Centre, provides an opportunity for all carers and staff to reach the level of competency necessary to cover any eventuality encountered in their work

with children and young people. Subjects covered are wide ranging with day courses and workshops offered on numerous subjects from the psychological perspective on understanding child development through to preparation for independence. All training is centered around core subjects i.e., Child Protection, Assessment Techniques, Counselling Skills, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, Report Writing, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Attachment, Separation and Loss, Looked After Children, Health and Safety, and Anti-Discriminatory Practice. It is planned that by 2009, all foster carers will have completed or will be in the process of completing NVQ Level 3 in Childcare.

All foster carers that are joining the company will complete the 'Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care' which has been produced by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). All new carers will complete this training in their first year of approval. All existing carers are expected to complete the Standards and gain the Children's Workforce Development Council certificate of Successful Completion by April 2011.

In addition to our in-house training, staff can access training provided by external providers such as BAAF and the Fostering Network as appropriate to their role. Training is a constantly developing area of activity and we expect our consultants and senior staff to keep abreast of developments in order that our training programmes reflect the best of current professional practice.

The method of safe control and restraint adopted by Ethelbert Childrens Services is the Non-violent Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) approach and we have three employees who have received training and are qualified to act as trainers for all carers and staff in the group

## **8. Placement Criteria including Policy on Emergency Placements**

### **Placement Procedures:**

Wherever possible, placements are planned and the child is properly prepared before moving to a carer's home. We are however, realistic enough to know that there will be occasions when local authorities require a place at a moment's notice. In these circumstances we are prepared to consider emergency placements in accordance with the conditions and procedures below and the proper approval of carers.

All placements albeit planned or unplanned will be subject to an individual child Care Plan from the point of entry. Care Plans will take account of the perceived needs of the child or young person although these will necessarily differ, dependent on whether the child is accepted as a planned or unplanned placement and to meet individual needs.

We always welcome informal discussions on the suitability of a placement, either by telephone or a visit.

### **Planned Admissions**

The child, parents and social worker are encouraged to make an informal visit to the home prior to the placement.

Applications should be made in writing by completing the Referral Form. Social workers should provide the agency with full information on each child so that proper matching procedures may be undertaken and full consultation made with carers.

Whilst it is acknowledged that it is not always possible, placements should be made in a planned way. If the placement is considered suitable then, wherever possible, a formal planning meeting will be set up at which the individual care plan will be drawn up. The social worker will be responsible for drawing up and distributing the plan to relevant parties. At this meeting, a date will be set for the placement.

In cases where this is not possible the placing social worker will be invited to attend a placement meeting, held at the carer's home, between the supervising social worker and the foster carer at the time of placement. Social Workers should ensure that the agency has available any relevant reports and a copy of any court orders for this meeting.

The placement will normally be reviewed after one calendar month and if necessary, amendments will be made to the Care Plan. Children and young people received as a planned placement will invariably be known to the local authority and should be accompanied by a written social history. Others will have undergone an assessment and their needs will have been made known either prior to placement or at the time of placement.

### **Emergency Admissions**

In all admissions, planned or otherwise, every effort will be made to match the child or young person to an individual carer's home. An assessment is carried out which considers children already placed and the presenting and known factors concerning the child to be placed. The agency takes into consideration the existing household members in this initial assessment which includes the carer's birth children and the impact which the proposed placement may have upon the family's ability to meet their needs. The agency has a duty under Regulation 34.2(b) to seek the consent of authorities with children in place at the time of placement and this will be sought as soon as is practicable in the circumstances.

In instances when an emergency placement is made, the referring social worker should ensure that the following action takes place:

1. Relevant reports are made available to staff giving an indication of the child's background and areas of special difficulty. This information can be given verbally in the first instance, but should be followed by written reports as quickly as possible.
2. The social worker should complete the Referral Form, Risk Assessment and a Checklist to ensure that we have all relevant information, e.g., next of kin, medication, special dietary requirements, and relevant contact telephone numbers.
3. The social worker will be expected to attend a planning meeting within seven working days of the date of admission to confirm the placement and develop a Care Plan.

Thereafter, the Care Plan will be reviewed at intervals of not more than one calendar month.

In all cases, whether it is a planned or emergency enquiry, we will confirm in writing what is being offered and cost involved within twenty-four hours of receiving the enquiry.

Unplanned placements may or may not be known to a local authority. In some cases, a placement will be required following a disruption of a foster placement, another home or direct from the family home. Usually a duty social worker makes a large majority of unplanned admissions either by day or in out-of-hours.

It is in these circumstances that the child or young person will not have predetermined plans on admission. Ethelbert Fostering Services will immediately make an initial assessment based on information (if any) provided by the placing social worker or others and the facts precipitating the placement.

## **9. Rights**

Children accommodated with Ethelbert Fostering Services can expect to be protected from harm, have their wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account and to be clearly told what they can or cannot do. Children will not be discriminated against for any reason, will receive education and healthcare to suit their needs, receive encouragement to participate in making decisions and plans for their future. They will also be offered opportunities to develop skills and interests. Every child will be prepared for

life as an adult and will be advised how to complain if things go wrong and for the complaint to be properly dealt with.

Our children have special needs and some have been severely damaged by their early life experiences. Their need is for skilled help. Some establishments seek to provide this by basing their treatment programmes on a distinct therapeutic model; e.g., psychoanalytical or behaviourist. Our aim is to be more eclectic, to seek the best of what is available and we do this by employing a number of therapists and consultants with differing skills on a sessional basis, as and when we need them. Over a period of time, we have developed close working relationships and understanding with our therapists, which we feel helps us to match the child to the most effective treatment method.

## **10. Facilities and Services Provided or Made Available**

We fully recognise the need to adequately prepare the young people in our care for adulthood and independence. In our care planning process, we seek to move young people to independence as part of a strategic programme which is needs led and designed in conjunction with the young person, their family, placing authority and significant others. Since 2004, the agency operates the Supported Accommodation Scheme in recognition of this important period of their growing autonomy and their need for skilled guidance and the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The agency can provide arrangements for outreach support for specific young people to facilitate their move to independence. Similarly, for all children placed, we encourage participation in work experience placements, which we are happy to organize for specific young persons as part of a transition into stable employment.

In keeping with the philosophy of the Children Act 1989, good care practice and in particular Section 24, Children Act 1989, we recognise the need to provide appropriate services for persons up to the age of twenty-one years who have been previously looked after by the local authority. For particular young persons, we are prepared to enter into separate contracted agreements for the provision of after care when appropriate and designated in care planning.

## **11. Promotion of Health**

Foster carers are required to ensure that children placed with them are registered with a General Practitioner and this will usually be the carer's own GP. Similarly, foster carers are required to register children placed with them with other health professionals such as dentists and opticians. Health is a supervision topic with all foster carers and the promotion of children's health

is a focal point. Wherever possible children are encouraged to consider the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and promote discussion and provide information about such issues as smoking, drug misuse, and the benefits of exercise and healthy eating.

Every effort is taken to ensure the proper handling of prescribed drugs. Where appropriate, older children are encouraged to administer their own medication, where this does not present a danger. Naturally, carers operate an unobtrusive oversight in these situations. Details of medication taken by a child are recorded as part of each carer's daily notes.

## **12. Education**

Where possible, our children attend local schools. This is in keeping with our policy of providing the child with as near a normal experience as possible.

For those who have been excluded from school, Ethelbert Childrens Services provides a comprehensive array of educational resources designed to meet individual pupil needs. All the resources are staffed by suitably qualified and experienced personnel under the supervision of the Director of Education. Pupils have access to a broad and balanced education based on the National Curriculum under the auspices of an EBD/SEN designation.

Ethelbert Childrens Services and Ethelbert Fostering Services provide the following educational resources: -

- **Davenport School**

The Davenport School is an Outreach Learning Unit – a joint venture between Newington Junior School and Ethelbert Childrens Services. The school is registered for 10 pupils of mixed gender between the ages of 7 and 11 and is situated within the grounds of Newington Junior School, Ramsgate. Pupils who attend the school follow the National Curriculum at the Key Stage II level and have access to all facilities within a mainstream school. Whenever appropriate, pupils are integrated into mainstream classrooms and included in mainstream activities. Emphasis is placed on the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and it is anticipated that the pupils at the school will eventually be successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools.

- **The Old Priory School (TOPS)**

The Old Priory School is registered to educate pupils aged 11 – 16 years to Key Stages 3 & 4 levels. All pupils have access to the National Curriculum within a safe, structured, learning environment. Courses lead to OCR and City & Guilds qualifications and pupils are placed in age-appropriate tutorial groups with experienced and qualified teaching personnel. Each group is supplemented by Learning Support

Assistants who are often staff with considerable experience in working with young people residentially.

- **Park Lane/Eastry**

Centres at Park Lane and Eastry offer vocational resources for young people fifteen and over who are unable to achieve academic qualifications. It offers a variety of courses in preparation for college entry.

### **13. Behaviour Management and Restraint**

We fully subscribe to the Policy of our registering authority Ofsted and any such amendments as it may produce. The core document of our discipline policy is 'Guidance on Permissible Forms of Control in Children's Residential Care', published by the Department of Health in April 1993. The young person, their families and social workers at the carer's home can see a copy of this publication. Each carer is provided with their own copy as well as Ethelbert Childrens Services guidance and instructions on this subject. Restraint is only used as a last resort and then only by 'holding techniques'. As stated previously, all staff and carers are trained in the Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention approach. Staff and carers are prohibited from using wrist, arm, neck or headlocks or any form of restraint which is likely to cause pain or injury. Any infringement would be investigated fully under the Disciplinary Code and the placing authority and Ofsted will be informed. Incidents of restraint are reported immediately to the placing authority and followed up with a written report in all cases.

As stated in our introduction, any system of discipline should be characterised by fairness and justice and most importantly, it must be seen to be so by children and staff. It must also be realistic to be effective and enforceable. Giving the child the opportunity to apologise and make reparation can encourage personal skills and moral development.

We never forget that carers, as well as children can make mistakes and where this happens; we encourage them to apologise and make amends. We try to avoid double standards and staff and carers are of course subject to their own written disciplinary procedures for serious misdemeanours.

As part of our open access records policy, all incidents involving absconding, discipline, law breaking and complaints are fully recorded and placed on the files of all children concerned, as well as staff and carer files if appropriate.

### **14. Child Protection/Bullying Policy**

Ethelbert Fostering Services have separate detailed policies relating to both our child protection procedures and response to bullying.

## **15. Religious Instruction/Observance**

Our organisation has no particular religious or denominational orientation. We do however, encourage and assist those children who wish to follow their own particular faith. All carers are encouraged to promote a child's identity through their religious observance and beliefs and training is provided in this area.

## **16. Contact with Family and Friends**

Every child has a right to have contact with his/her family and friends, providing this does not affect his/her safety and wellbeing. We seek to ensure that contact arrangements, i.e., where appropriate, are accurately and clearly detailed in the Care Plan.

We are able to offer supervised contact if this is required.

Parents are made welcome when they visit and are provided with refreshments. We can arrange hotel or guest house accommodation for those parents who wish to stay overnight.

This innovative service developed by Ethelbert Childrens Services is in response to criticism sometimes raised by critics of the placement of children a long way from their homes and which is discouraged by the 1989 Children Act. The aim of the Accommodation Service is to provide accommodation for parents of children placed within Ethelbert Homes and Ethelbert Fostering Services to enable meaningful contact between the child and parents or significant others to occur.

The service, therefore, addresses much of the criticism and is welcomed by child, parent and local authorities alike. The cost of the service is accounted for in the package price and is organised by the operational base.

## **17. Arrangements for Dealing with Unauthorised Absences**

If a child is absent without agreement, the police, the placing authority and the child's parents where applicable, are informed. The interval before a child or young person is reported as being missing would depend on the age of the child, vulnerability and the precipitating circumstances.

Every attempt is made to prevent children from being absent without agreement and our main tools in avoiding this are vigilance and trust. Where a child has a history of absences without permission, or it is thought that they may absent themselves, then we seek to make explicit in the Care Plan how the situation should be dealt with.

There may be occasions when, by absenting themselves, a child faces dangers of a serious or life threatening nature and in these circumstances, we would seek to restrain by the use of minimum force for a limited period until proper arrangements can be made to ensure the child's safety. This of course is in line with Guidance on the subject contained with 'Guidance on Permissible Forms of Control in Children's Residential Care', published by the Department of Health in April 1993, and our own guidance on this subject.

When a child returns after a period of absence every attempt should be made to talk through the issues that led to the child taking leave of their foster home. The response to the child should be measured and concerned without in any way being construed as punitive.

## **18. Review of Placement Plans**

Circumstances, events and people can change rapidly in the life of a child in care; in addition the child's behaviour and needs are also subject to change. There is therefore, a need to keep the Care Plan under constant review. It is equally important that there is a structure to the review process otherwise it can so easily be missed in the busy day to day concerns of the home and the outside professionals. Regular, recorded supervision of all carers takes place at each of the carers' homes when the Care Plan of each child is examined and the information arising from this is used to inform the review process.

## **19. Independent Visitor**

An Independent Visitor is included in our overall package and is our response to ensure that children and young people can if they wish have meaningful contact with someone other than a member of staff- this can be for several reasons such as none or minimal family or where geographical distance makes visiting difficult. Additionally, the role of the Independent Visitor can be used where it is desirable for an independent aspect in cases of complaints or allegations. Where an Independent Visitor is required, a person will be nominated to that role based on the requirements of that specific situation.