

# Ethelbert

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Fostering Services

**Inspiring Children to succeed!**

## Statement of Purpose

January 2024



# Statement of Purpose & Function

## January 2024

**Ethelbert**  
Fostering Services

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## Introduction

Ethelbert Fostering Services (EFS) is a substantial and versatile provision that caters for solo placements, sibling groups, challenging behaviour and children and young people with a variety of complex needs. It is well resourced with education, health and therapeutic provisions.

The focus of the agency is to ensure safe and stable placements where children and young people can thrive and develop in order to achieve their full potential. Often our children and young people arrive following a series of placement breakdowns. By specifically matching the presenting needs of the individual child with the identified skills of our dedicated foster carers, we succeed in providing stability and structure to their lives and help them progress towards positive outcomes.

At our last Ofsted Inspection in 2021 the agency was awarded an overall rating of 'Good'.

## Mission Statement

For Ethelbert Fostering Services to inspire children to succeed, we firmly embrace our Foster Carers Charter statement:

*"Our shared belief is that good quality foster placements help achieve stability for children and young people, satisfaction and accomplishment for carers but most importantly affords these children and young people a vital second chance to experience a safe and fulfilling childhood"*

## Status and Constitution

EFS is an independent fostering provider trading under Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited – a private limited company (Reg. 03291503). It is a family owned business established in 1972 and offering an extensive range of residential and fostering services, supported by specialist education provisions in our own registered schools and vocational centres.

EFS is registered and inspected by Ofsted (SC036583) and complies with the standards and expectations identified in the Children's Act 1989, Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Amendments 2013, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and the Fostering Services and Care Standards Act 2000.





## Placements

Our foster carers have a diverse range of skills and experience to meet the needs of any children and young people matched to their families. EFS offers the following services;

- ◆ Long Term / Permanent Placements
- ◆ Assessment / Short Term Placements
- ◆ Respite Placements
- ◆ Bridging Placements
- ◆ Therapeutic Fostering Placements
- ◆ Pre-adoption Placements
- ◆ Emergency Placements
- ◆ UASC Placements
- ◆ Staying Put Arrangements

## REFERRALS



## Aims & Objectives

### Our Aims:

- ◆ To provide safe and stable placements where children and young people can thrive and develop in order to achieve their full potential.
- ◆ To uphold the rights of children and young people and to ensure that they are listened to and valued, protected from harm and provided within a safe family environment.
- ◆ To provide a positive experience of family life for all our children and young people.
- ◆ To make moving a positive experience for every child and young person and settle them into their new home as effortlessly as possible.
- ◆ To provide a caring family environment for all children and young people, where they can experience positive parenting with foster carers who genuinely care and consistently convey unconditional positive regard.
- ◆ To prepare children and young people for independence.
- ◆ To provide adaptable, bespoke care and education packages specifically designed to meet and achieve a wide range of needs and outcomes.
- ◆ To ensure that family time arrangements, where appropriate, are supported.
- ◆ To provide a caring child centred service conforming to the highest standards of professional practice.

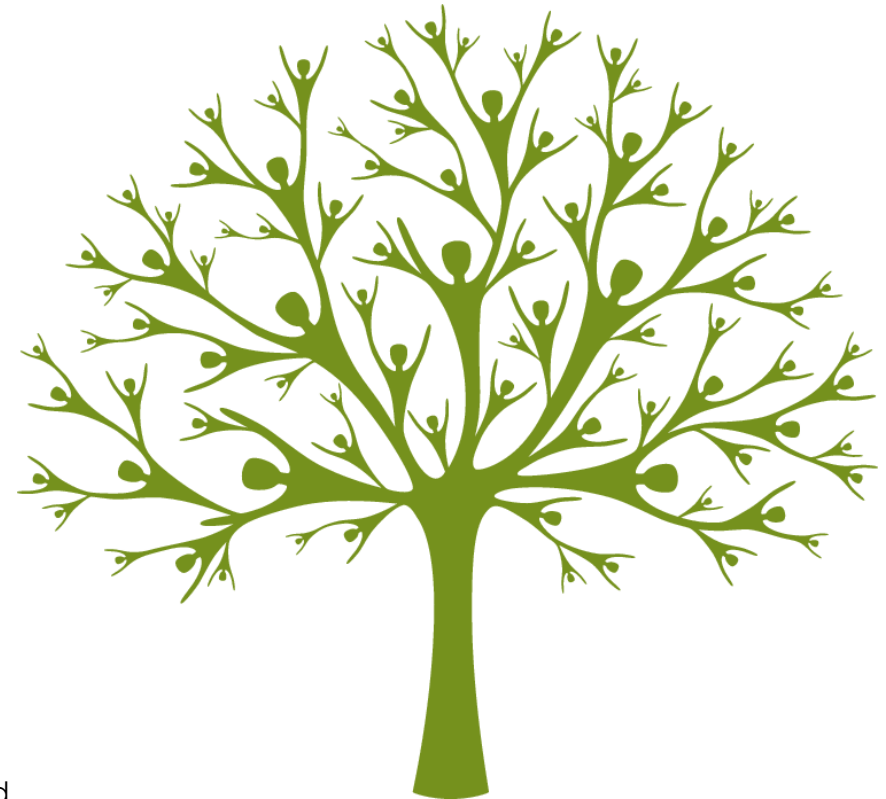
### Our Objectives:

- ◆ To ensure children and young people's views are paramount and contribute to care planning.
- ◆ All children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop their full potential, be involved in the decision making about their lives and have access to their family/friends and significant others.
- ◆ To support children and young people to have positive views of themselves by recognising each individual's gender, faith, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation and any disability they might have.
- ◆ To provide access to a wide range of therapeutic services.
- ◆ To provide supervised and supported family time if this is required, by our trained and skilled sessional workers.
- ◆ All children and young people will be cared for by adults who offer respect, concern, affection and experience appropriate to meet their individual needs.
- ◆ To prioritise all staff and foster carer training through our own training centre which is staffed by a full-time Training Centre Manager/QCF Assessor and Administrator
- ◆ To access training provided by external providers such as Coram BAAF and The Fostering Network which is subject to continuous review.
- ◆ Provide carers with access to a qualified and experienced supervising social worker
- ◆ 24-hour support 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- ◆ To use lessons from complaints, compliments, inspections and outcomes from children and young people, Ofsted, carers and local authorities to improve our service.
- ◆ To continuously develop the service by reflecting the latest good practice and research findings.

## Panel Members

The Panel also comprises of members providing the following expertise:

- ◆ Qualified independent social workers who have extensive experience of fostering panels and completing fostering assessments
- ◆ Conducting Ofsted inspections
- ◆ Education and pastoral care
- ◆ Nursing, working with foster families, family assessments, completing parenting assessments and providing early intervention strategies and a personal advisor to teenage parents.
- ◆ Therapeutic services
- ◆ Experience of consultancy for careers and work-based development
- ◆ Managing and supporting Independent foster agencies
- ◆ A former child looked after who has experienced fostering
- ◆ Foster Carers



## Agency Decision Maker

Our Agency Decision Maker is a highly qualified and experienced independent social work consultant and trainer. She has experience of fostering and adoption alongside a particular interest in safeguarding. Prior to her independent social work practice, she worked extensively as a senior manager and Head of Service within local authority children's services.

## Standards of Care & Service Quality



### Placement of Children & Young People

The safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount

- ◆ Taking children and young people's views, wishes and feelings into account, wherever possible, is an integral part of our philosophy
- ◆ Children and young people develop emotional resilience, a positive identity, psychological wellbeing, healthy outcomes and educational achievement through personalised care
- ◆ Children and Young People experience care and support from foster carers who promote their individual identity

### Assessment, Approval & Panel

The panel is a multi disciplinary body drawn from a central list. It meets as required, but usually on a monthly basis and its purpose is to assess and review foster carer approval and the terms of approval in a fair and transparent manner. Its members have a broad range of experience and qualifications with access to specialist advice such as health, therapy, education and training. Access is also available to an independent medical advisor and a legal advisor.

The EFS fostering panel complies with the Fostering Services Regulations and guidance such as Effective Fostering Panels produced by Coram Baaf. It has adopted core principles such as; having fair and transparent processes that enable panel to balance the skills and abilities of foster carers, whilst keeping children and young people's welfare paramount. EFS recognises that panel recommendations can have a lifelong impact on children, young people and families.

### Chair

Our Panel Chair is an experienced, child centred independent social worker. She has held a range of senior management roles within children's services alongside her independent social work practice. She has a keen knowledge of fostering and the needs of children who are looked after.



## Foster Carer Agreements

All foster carers enter into a foster care agreement, covering the matters set out in the regulations. The purpose of the agreement is to provide written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership and about what can be expected by both parties.

## Foster Carers Charter

The charter explains what EFS and foster carers can expect from each other. To achieve our goals, good quality foster placements help achieve stability for children and young people, namely:

- ♦ Working in partnership
- ♦ Sharing Information
- ♦ Transparency
- ♦ Fair Treatment
- ♦ Communication & Consultation
- ♦ Respect for the Child
- ♦ Learning, Development & Support
- ♦ Communication & Consultation





## Monitoring and Quality Assurance

### Complaints



The Manager will ensure that all complaints and representations are recorded in writing, along with any action taken and the outcome of the investigation. It is our aim for any complaint to be resolved safely and quickly whilst maintaining a level of independence, dependent upon the nature and level of the complaint. All complaints will be addressed thoroughly and be responded to within a maximum of twenty-eight days.

We ensure we comply with current legislation and best practice and lessons from research. We have robust and effective quality assurance systems and regularly review policies and procedures. Information about the quality of our fostering service comes from many sources, an example being questionnaires from carers and young people we look after. Feedback about the service is collated and presented to the fostering team and any improvements to further develop the service are appropriately addressed.

### Services for Young People

#### We Offer:

- ◆ To support family time. We have our own well-equipped homely facility, which provides a safe, private and warm environment.
- ◆ Preparation for independence. We use a life skills folder for every child of fourteen years and above to support their pathway planning journey
- ◆ Access to our health promotion specialist
- ◆ Holiday activities
- ◆ Quarterly newsletters
- ◆ Advocacy services
- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Children's groups
- ◆ A children's council
- ◆ All children and young people receive a welcome box that reflects the child's interests, a children's guide and a memories book.
- ◆ Access to educational provisions.
- ◆ Access to therapeutic services.



## Health

### We offer a wide range of therapeutic services:

- ◆ Psychological Assessments
- ◆ Psychotherapy
- ◆ Speech & Language Therapy
- ◆ Systemic Psychotherapy
- ◆ Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- ◆ Play Therapy
- ◆ Art Therapy
- ◆ Music Therapy
- ◆ Drama Therapy
- ◆ Counselling
- ◆ Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR)

### In addition to our panel of consultant therapists, we retain the services of:

- ◆ A Therapy Services Manager
- ◆ A Health Promotion Specialist

## Health Promotion

Our dedicated health promotion specialist is available to visit and discuss any health issues that arise. Along with the support of the supervising social worker, she also ensures that all health assessment recommendations are fully actioned. Additionally, she helps identify local support/activities within the community.





## Education



We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people within the agency have the opportunity to reach their potential and recognise that access to a high standard of appropriate education is paramount in achieving this.

We work in partnership with mainstream schools and Special Educational Needs schools in order to secure and maintain school placements. However, we are aware that for some of our children and young people this is not a positive experience or the best option. For these children and young people, we can offer a placement in one of our three DfE registered schools. Our schools include primary, secondary and a vocational centre which works in conjunction with local colleges and focus on a range of skilled trades and professions.



The Old Priory School

### The Old Priory School (TOPS)

The Old Priory School is registered to educate up to 33 young people aged 11 – 16 years (Key Stage 3 & 4) levels. All pupils have access to the National Curriculum within a safe, structured, learning environment. Courses lead to GCSE, ASDAN, functional skills and a range of

vocational qualifications. Pupils are placed into tutorial groups appropriate to their individual needs with experienced and qualified teaching staff. Each group has a dedicated Learning Support Assistant who has considerable experience in working with children.

### The Davenport School

The Davenport School is an Independent SEMH bespoke primary learning environment. The school is registered for up to 20 pupils of mixed gender and ability aged between 5 -12 years (Key Stage 1-2). The school provides its own curriculum. It follows the key objectives of the Literacy and Numeracy National Curriculum on a



The Davenport School

daily basis and pupils are challenged and supported to enable them to reach their full potential. All lessons are made fun and interactive with a key focus of being student led. In the afternoons a termly topic is taught in lessons incorporating educational trips out to make the curriculum and lessons interesting and engaging. Physical and practical topics such as PE and PSHE are encouraged giving the children the opportunities to experience a wide range of topics throughout the week.

### Park Lane Vocational Centre Affiliated to The Old Priory School

Park Lane offers a Vocational Curriculum enabling children to acquire trade skills including: Bricklaying, Carpentry, Plaster Boarding and Plastering, Guttering, Plastic Pipework, Concreting Skills, Painting and Decorating, Ceramic Wall Tiling, CDT, Health and Safety and Literacy and Numeracy. The courses taught are aimed at specific qualifications which prepare students for 16+ college placements and to help students gain employment within the construction industry. The current qualifications that students work towards include: CITB Level 1, City and Guilds Level 1, NPTC - Entry Level 2 & 3 and ASDAN Bronze, Silver and Gold award.



Vocational Training



## Services for Foster Carers

### Training and Development

We recognise foster carers have an array of valuable knowledge, skills and experience. Our trainers ensure training is delivered in an arena where foster carers are able to share their experiences, skills and ideas, whilst gaining support and furthering their development with knowledge and expertise from specialist trainers.



Each year a comprehensive training package is devised to support the training, support and development standards for foster carers (TSD).

Skills and knowledge are continuously reviewed through supervision and annual reviews. EFS is committed to continuing professional development for our carers and provides each family with a personal development plan, which are reviewed annually.

All new applicants attend the pre-approval training course, 'Skills to Foster', endorsed by the Fostering Network. Following approval, a personal development plan is devised to help ensure they have the relevant skills and knowledge to support them in their fostering role.

EFS maintain a training and development portfolio in order to record how they are meeting the competencies required. Foster carers have access to a wide range of resources including on-line training that provides an introductory level which is then supplemented by more advanced face to face training.

All carers have access to a well-resourced library that is regularly updated in line with current research and practice initiatives.

*“ Belonging to a smaller foster agency like Ethelbert was the best decision we made, this is our 1st year as foster parents and it can be quite daunting learning new skills and ideas behind caring for looked after children, our supervising social worker has supported us brilliantly throughout this year.*

*Ethelbert have provided us with courses both online and in groups to give us the tools we need to guide us through this new process.*

*The 24hr support line is invaluable, knowing there is always someone there to speak to along with the regular support meetings with fellow foster carers has been a huge help too.*

”

*...Ethelbert Foster Carers ES & GS*

*January 2022*

*“ It was a lot of hard work going through the process, but it was worth every minute. Everyone at Ethelbert's have been very supportive despite Covid, we have all battled through together. Fostering is so rewarding, and we love being able to give a child a loving family home, and as much support as they need.*

*Whenever we need support there is always someone from Ethelbert's on the other end of the phone. Our son and all of our grandchildren think it's a great thing, and our eldest granddaughter says she now wants to do it when she gets older....*

”

*..Ethelbert Foster Carers JD & PD*

*January 2022*

## Services for Foster Carers

“We have been fostering with Ethelbert’s Fostering Services for 7 years. Our first placement is still with us and we have recently welcomed a young sibling group into our family. We have had several other placements short term and have also enjoyed having some children stay with us on respite. The placement team have matched suitable children for our family and listened to our concerns/wishes when searching for a placement.

We feel we have been well supported by our Supervising Social Worker and other foster carers within the agency.

Through the agencies social events we have had the opportunity to see the growth and development of other carers foster children and how they have become members of their family.”

***...Ethelbert Foster Carers DB & MM  
January 2022***

## Support

Foster carers receive support and supervision from their named supervising social worker. This is in the form of regular phone contact and email/text messaging. Home visits for supervision/support take place every month as a minimum. Additional visits are needs led.

Newly approved foster carers receive weekly visits for the first four weeks of their first placement, followed by fortnightly visits for the following two months and, thereafter, a minimum of monthly visits.

Peer mentoring support is also available for new and existing foster carers. Newsletters are published termly and foster carers are encouraged to have an input to these.

Foster carers have good access to respite care and day care is provided locally by our skilled sessional workers. We have good links with local contact centres and local CAMHS services.

Regular activities/days out are organised to help support foster carers, their families and the children and young people in their care.

Every foster carer is automatically provided free membership to The Fostering Network.

We provide reflective practice support for all foster carers with a qualified therapist. This affords carers the time and space to explore the impact of caring for traumatised children and young people and provides them with strategies to manage feelings and behaviours.

Support groups are held on a quarterly basis providing peer support, updates on new developments/practice and giving carers the opportunity to meet other carers.



Professional Support & Guidance

# Organisation Structure

## Meet the team

At Ethelbert Fostering Services we pride ourselves in employing individuals who are experienced, qualified and passionate about caring for children and young people.

High quality assessment skills, proactive decision making, knowledgeable planning and placement practice are integral to our philosophy, resulting in a well-trained, reflective and insightful team.

The Managing Director & Responsible Individual, Leslie Davenport has significant experience in fostering and residential care settings. Additionally he holds a level 5 management qualification.

The Operations Director, Andy Marshall has an established childcare services background in financial planning and business management and has provided support and managerial oversight to the Registered Manager, Agency and organisation for 22 years to ensure a financially secure future.

The Registered Manager and individual leading the team is Cassie Martin. Cassie is an experienced and qualified Social Worker, qualifying in 2012 (over 9 years of which has been within fostering teams). She holds an Degree in social work, a Level 5 Diploma in Management and is qualified to assume the role of the agencies Designated Safeguarding Lead. Our Carers whom are central to our team are supported by a team of skilled and experienced supervising social workers all of who possess a background in working with children and families. They are all registered with Social Work England.

Supervision for the Registered Manager is regularly provided by an external, suitably qualified and experienced Consultant Social Worker.

The team is supported by a child centred Practice Manager, Siobhan McAree, who promotes continuous improvement in outcomes for children in our care. Siobhan holds a Degree in Social Work, obtained in 2007 and a Practice Teaching and Enabling Others award. Siobhan is an experienced Social Worker who has worked within Statutory Child Protection for the past 14 years, including in the role of a Social Worker, Deputy Team Manager, Advanced Practitioner, Child Protection Chair and Senior Practitioner.

Our Annual Reviewing Officer is Michelle Knell who qualified as a Social Worker in 2010. Since then she has worked for various Local Authorities, CAFCASS and as an Independent Social Worker before joining Ethelbert Fostering Services in 2023. The Annual Reviewing Officer role is key to promoting the quality of experience for the children placed with our carers through providing comprehensive and analytical Annual Foster Carer Review.

Our comprehensive administrative support is delivered by an effective, efficient, reliable and supportive team who thrive on ensuring the work they produce is of the highest professional standard.

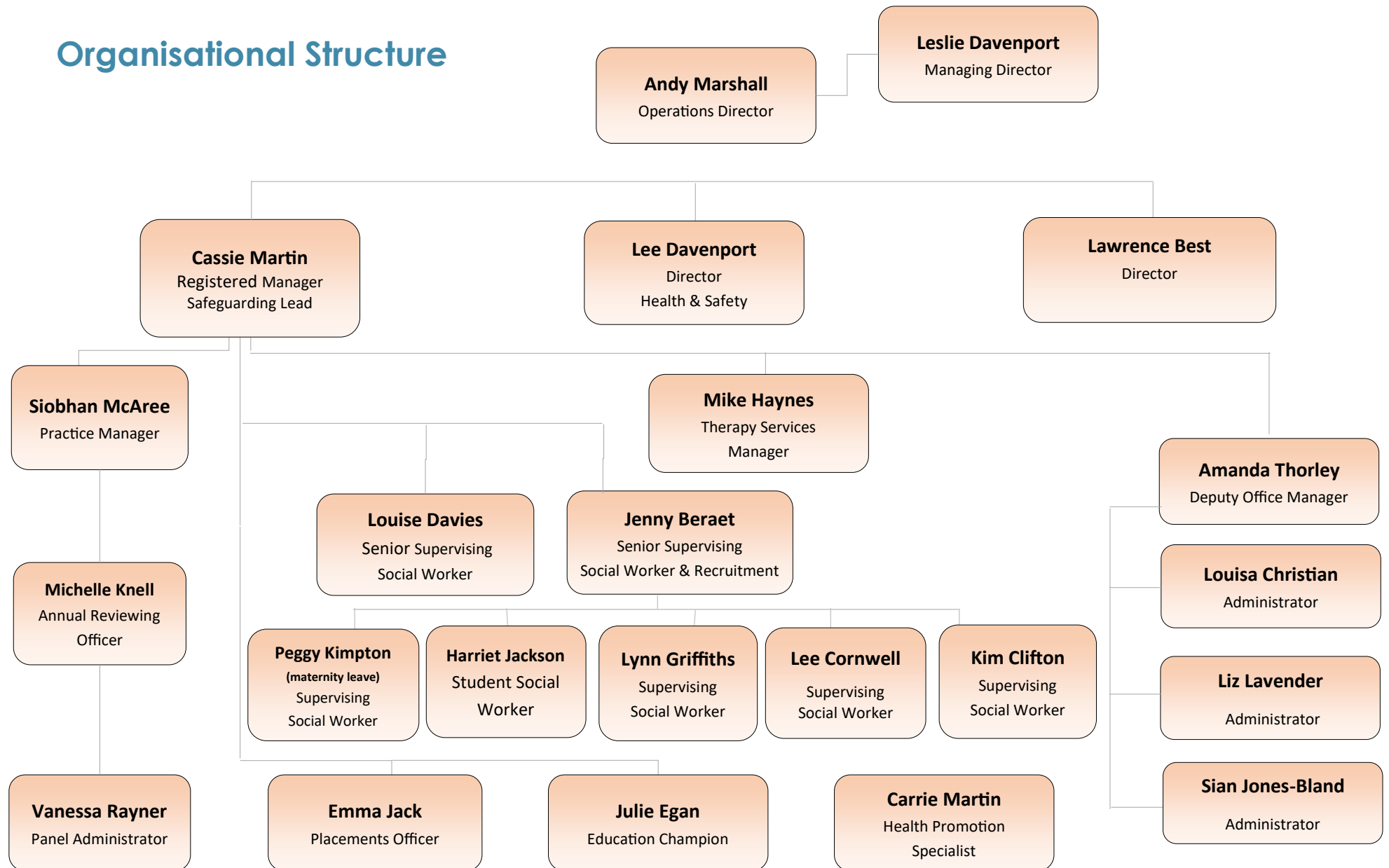
Taking referrals and liaising with our Foster Carers and the placing authorities ensuring a good match for the children to foster families is the role of our Placements Officer, Emma Jack.

The health of the children we look after is supported by a range of health experts, including therapists and counsellors. We have a dedicated Health Promotions Worker and a Therapy Manager who are committed to improving outcomes and meeting the health needs of our children.

Our dedicated Health Promotion Specialist holds a degree in Health Promotion and is available to visit young people and discuss any health issues that arise. Education is provided on health topics and emotional support is offered as necessary. Along with the support of the Supervising Social Worker, our Health Promotion Specialist ensures that any health recommendations are fully actioned and provides resources and/or signposting to other services as appropriate. Children are afforded the opportunity to attend groups in a range of health related topics. Our Health Promotion Specialist provides training to Foster Carers covering topics such as; sexual health, substance misuse and medication.



# Organisational Structure



# Ethelbert

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